AN OUTLINE OF THE BRITISH LABOR MOVEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

BY THE RIGHT HONORABLE ARTHUR HENDERSON

I have often been impressed with the deep interest which is displayed by American students of public affairs in the growth, organization, spirit, methods, aims and ideals of the British labor movement. It is remarkable the number of investigators who come individually or in groups to study labor conditions and labor organization in this country. Business men, financial magnates, educationalists, university professors, students, political thinkers, professional men and women, trade-union research workers—men and women of all classes, interests and opinions—devote a considerable amount of their time when visiting England to making a close personal study of industrial and political labor, of its sections, its schools of thought, its tendencies and its personalities.

Perhaps this is due in a measure to two outstanding facts: (a) that the organized labor movement in Britain is regarded almost universally as the most powerful, highly organized, and progressive working class organization in the world, and (b) that the political labor movement is expected soon to be called upon to assume the responsibilities of national government. The British Trade Union movement is the pioneer working class movement, and its long history, which is crowded with the varied experiences that are inseparable from pioneer work and which offers valuable lessons and guides to newer movements of a similar character, is a rich mine for present day students

of industrial affairs. The political labor movement is of a comparatively modern origin, its history dating back to 1900. Yet in the space of twenty-three years it has made such remarkable progress and developed such power as to be the second political party in the State today and admittedly the party from which the alternative government to the present government will have to be drawn.

Many books have been written about the industrial and political organization and activities of British labor, but all of them together present a very inadequate record of its history. A full and impartial record of the movement would indeed occupy many large volumes and would be almost equivalent to a record of British industrial and social history during the past seventy years. Such a work remains yet to be undertaken, but in the meantime the constant stream of much less ambitious ventures dealing with this or that phase of organization or policy, though it does not quench the growing thirst for information about labor does, at any rate, give partial satisfaction. Mr. Blanshard's Outline is another small rivulet flowing into the main stream. It covers a vast amount of ground, and while it may not be free from small imperfections, it is nevertheless an excellent flash-light picture of the various sides of the British labor movement. It is the work of an American trade unionist rapidly surveying the industrial and political field and making comparisons between the British and American movements. I have no doubt that the book will be both interesting and informative to American workers and students.

British labor welcomes and appreciates the American interest in its work. The visit of American investigators and others desirous of studying our organization, methods and policy is important and useful not only in that it leads to a better understanding of what British Labor stands for,

but also because it affords those engaged in American working class movements and those who are active in British working class movements an opportunity to acquire a truer appreciation of each other. Friendship, understanding, mutual esteem and intercourse form the true basis of peace, and the more points of sympathetic contact there are between national working class movements the stronger will become the power and influence of world labor for the maintenance of peace.

Labor the world over is essentially international in its outlook and spirit. The spirit of insularity among governments has contributed in the past to the creation of misunderstandings and antagonisms. Labor is not insular. It stands for no narrow or selfish nationalism. It stands for international peace, international justice and international understanding. And national labor movements must have their points of contact with one another. They ought to understand each others' problems, aims, intentions, aspirations. They ought to be something more than neighborly; they ought to be in living association. Their problems may be different, their methods may vary, but they are aiming at the same ultimate goal and they are animated by the same spirit.

American labor and our own labor movement, working together in harmony and understanding, may exercise a very powerful influence on international affairs of common interest. The sympathetic study of each others' organizations, the publication of books explaining the tendencies, aims and methods of each others' movements, and the personal contact which is established by the exchange of visits will assist in the strengthening of the old ties of friendship and in the cultivation of new ones.

A. H.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This little book is a compilation of the things which an American trade unionist found of most interest in the British labor movement. While I am responsible for all the errors, I am not responsible for all the hard work that was needed to discover the facts contained herein. Generous Britishers of every class have talked to me, reviewed my findings or written books and magazine articles giving me the required information. The books and magazine articles are, for the most part, contained in the bibliography at the end of the book. The Britishers are so numerous that I could not name them all but I must mention first Arthur Greenwood, who reviewed the manuscript in its original form and made many valuable suggestions, and other leaders who reviewed certain sections including W. W. Henderson, G. D. H. Cole, J. J. Mallon, Malcolm Sparkes, Mrs. Barbara Drake, Thomas Alcock and Miss Madeline Symons. To H. B. Pointing, of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, I am indebted for much of the material contained in Chapter 13. Arthur Gleason, the pioneer writer on this subject in America, also gave me valuable assistance. Most of all I am indebted to those American friends who made my visits to England possible.

P. B.

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AN OUTLINE OF THE BRITISH LABOR MOVEMENT

Chapter 1

AMERICAN AND BRITISH LABOR

The dramatic rise of the British Labor Party to the position of His Majesty's opposition in the House of Commons has focused the attention of the entire Western world upon the British labor movement. On the benches where Burke and Gladstone once sat there are now over 140 miners, machinists, weavers, boilermakers and working class leaders ready to take over the government of Great Britain if the conservative parties fail. The movement which has brought the British working class to the threshold of power is not the sudden spurt of a handful of insurrectionists working upon the discontent of the people. It is a conscious and highly organized section of the state moving deliberately toward a new kind of industrial and political society.

The movement has tremendous significance for America because it is a movement of kindred peoples, speaking a common language and struggling in the midst of industrial problems which are not unlike the problems of America. What British labor does in one decade may be done in America in the next.

A LABOR MOVEMENT WITH A TRADITION

To understand the British labor movement it is well to note first of all that it is a movement of one hundred and

twenty-five years' growth. Many of the issues which are today vital in the American labor movement were disposed of fifty years ago in Great Britain. When America was still predominantly an agricultural country Great Britain had passed through the first and worst stages of the Industrial Revolution. With the introduction of power-driven machinery great numbers of workers were brought together under one employer in factories and mills. They were forced to work fifteen and eighteen hours a day for wages that would now be refused by an errand boy. They formed unions and went on strikes only to be beaten, imprisoned and exiled. When they demanded a ten-hour day they were denounced as criminals. When they formed a picket line, they were imprisoned for intimidation. Although temporarily defeated in times of industrial depression they did not lose courage. Step by step they won the right to organize, the right to strike, collective bargaining, political power in the state, the reduction of hours, the enormous increase of wages, and a measure of joint control over working conditions.

Every forward step which the British workers have taken has been bitterly fought by the employing classes and has been conceded only when labor demonstrated its superior economic or political power. With such a background of struggle the British labor movement is not a delicate thing. It does not depend on employers' sanctions: it is not concerned about its respectability. It is proud with the pride of a hard won success.

THE LABOR UNITY

Although, as we shall see later, the labor movement is officially broken up into a thousand different fragments, in reality it has a unity which the American labor movement cannot attain. It has the unity of race and geography.

Practically all the workers are British, born and bred in Great Britain, with a common education and conception of life. With this common background they cannot drift very far apart. They speak the same language, read the same newspapers and attend the same schools. There is little opportunity for employers to play one national group against the other. There are no racial jealousies to divide the unions into quarreling factions.

The smallness of Great Britain is also an important factor in maintaining the unity of the labor movement. Employers cannot run away from the unions because there is no place to go. All the mines and factories are within a few hours' journey of each other. The contagion of a strike or organizing campaign may spread rapidly over the whole of Great Britain. The industrial conditions which are won in one district by the unions are usually applicable to the other districts.

THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

There are certain points of likeness between the British and American labor movements which are just as important as the differences. The British laboring class is far removed from the upper classes in wealth and power, farther removed than the American working class. In almost every British city the workers are crowded together in narrow streets and still narrower tenements, while the members of the upper classes live in spacious homes and are waited upon by able-bodied servants. The contrast between the classes is none the less real because it has always existed in British life.

"A mere handful of people owns the nation," says Sir Leo Chiozza Money. "It is probably true that a group of about 120,000 people, who with their families form about one-seventieth part of the population, owns about two-

thirds of the entire accumulated wealth of the United Kingdom." "2,500 persons," says the same authority, "own forty million acres of land or more than half of all the land in the United Kingdom." The titles of much of this land have descended from the days of feudalism and are still respected by the English law.

"At least seven-eighths of the nation's accumulated wealth," according to Sidney and Beatrice Webb, "and with it nearly all the effective authority, is still in the hands of one-eighth of the population; and the seven-eighths of the people find themselves in consequence still restricted, as regards the means of life, to less than half of that national income which is exclusively the product of those who labor by hand or by brain. The 'leisure class'—the men and women who live by owning and not by working, a class increasing in actual numbers if not relatively to the workers—seem to the great mass of working people to be showing themselves, if possible, more frivolous and more insolent in their irresponsible consumption, by themselves and their families, of the relatively enormous share that they are able to take from the national income."

In every-day life this fact means "that one family in every eight in England have only one room as their home—one room in which the whole family has to live, sleep, eat, cook, wash, pray, suffer illness, face death or endure the pangs and inconveniences surrounding birth." This fact means that the soldiers who won the war have returned to work for less than a living wage, if indeed they can find any variety of work, while billions of dollars of surplus profit are still in the hands of owners who made it directly from the war.

This general condition of the unjust distribution of wealth and power in Great Britain is the central wrong of

the social order which the labor movement is aiming to correct.

The American and British labor movements have both been profoundly stirred by the psychological changes of the war. In Great Britain the drift of public opinion since the war has been toward the labor point of view. Confidence in the old order of society has been shaken in all classes. The commercial competition which caused the war is actively at work creating causes for new wars.

The labor movement has crystallized the discontent of the soldiers who came back from the trenches because it is the only movement with a thoroughgoing program which seems to offer them anything. It calls for a clean slate. It does not seek to compromise with war and armaments. It fits in with the post-war psychology of a nation which has found defeat in victory.

In the chapters which follow we will take a bird's-eye view of the way in which the British Labor Movement has risen out of the traditions of a century of struggle to express the aspirations of the workers.

Chapter 2

THE LABOR PARTY

THE RISE OF THE LABOR PARTY

From the back bedroom of Ramsay MacDonald's house in No. 3 Lincoln's Inn Field to the front benches of Parliament in twenty years the Labor Party has come. Its growth is the most inspiring achievement of the British labor movement. It is a party of manual and brain workers, controlled by workers and led by workers.

Fifty years ago there was no indication that the workers would ever reject the old parties and create a party of their own. The growth of the idea of a separate labor party was at first painfully slow. In 1892 Kier Hardie sat alone as the first independent worker to be elected to the House of Commons. He helped to organize the Independent Labor Party, a group of vigorous young socialists who set about to convert the trade unions to believe in the political action of labor. By 1900 they had so far succeeded that the Trades Union Congress appointed a Labor Representation Committee.

Since the formation of this committee, the power of labor in politics has steadily grown. The Labor Party, officially formed in 1906, startled the country in that year by electing 29 members to Parliament. In 1910 the party elected 42 members and in 1918 about 70. In November, 1922, the Labor Party returned 144 representatives and some 10,000 local and municipal officials.

If the increase in the Labor Party vote continues to be

as rapid as it was in the years from 1900 to 1922, Great Britain will have a clear majority of labor voters by 1926. The labor votes have increased from 62,000 in 1900 to 323,000 in 1906 to 505,000 in 1910 to 2,244,000 in 1918 to 4,235,000 in 1922. This last figure was only about one million less than the vote of the victorious conservatives.

The Labor Party's greatest gains have come in the coal fields where the miners are overwhelmingly pro-labor in their political allegiance. Certain sections of Scotland, too, are almost solidly labor. The two districts in which the Labor Party has over two-thirds of the representatives in Parliament are the most revolutionary in Great Britain, South Wales and the industrial district around Glasgow. Many of the industrial districts are, however, conservative and the farming districts are overwhelmingly anti-labor.

HOW THE LABOR PARTY IS ORGANIZED

Ninety-nine per cent of the Labor Party come from the trade unions. The party is a federation composed chiefly of large labor organizations which have joined in a body and agreed to contribute a tax for each one of their individual members. The tax for each individual member of a constituent organization is about six cents a year. There are great advantages in this plan because the Labor Party is assured of a definite financial backing, and the unions are assured that the party cannot fall into the hands of any group not representative of the labor movement. Of course, there are many thousand members of the unions who do not vote the Labor Party ticket; but the grip of the Labor Party upon the imagination of the workers is constantly growing stronger. The great unions are now almost all affiliated to the party and are steadily increasing their political activity.

The Labor Party is made up not only of unions and

socialist societies affiliated in a body but also of individual members. The brain workers are joining the party in increasing numbers and are being provided for by separate local organizations. They have an influence far greater than their numbers indicate.

The party is controlled by the members voting in the unions, local Labor Parties, and Trades Councils. There are over 2,650 local divisions of the Labor Party. Each local Labor Party is supposed to have affiliated to it the local branches of the national unions and socialist societies which belong to the National Labor Party. So the party is really a political federation with local branches of the federation. The societies and unions which form the Labor Party do not lose their identity as they would in our American party system. The Fabian Society, the Independent Labor Party and the Amalgamated Engineering Union, for example, participate as organizations in the Labor Party compaigns. This system of federation allows one wing of the party, such as the Independent Labor Party, to be somewhat more revolutionary than the main body of the party, and still to remain inside the party organization. There is no split between the Socialists and the unions in political activity as there is in the United States. Even the Communist Party, as we shall see later, has repeatedly applied for admission to the Labor Party.

Some of the union members who are opponents of the Labor Party object to paying the annual tax to a party which they oppose. Parliament has made a special exemption for them by passing a law which allows them to refuse to pay the political tax without being penalized by the unions. It is significant that very few members have asked for this exemption. Among the 400,000 members of the National Union of General Workers, for example, only 23 had claimed exemption up to 1921.

The Labor Party is controlled by an annual conference of delegates from the affiliated organizations and by an executive committee of twenty-three members elected by the conference. The party carries on a vigorous political propaganda continuously through some 150 political agents who are paid by the party or affiliated societies to carry on the labor campaign. Thousands of pamphlets and circulars written by England's leading writers are sent to every corner of Great Britain.

HOW THE CANDIDATES ARE CHOSEN

There are no direct primaries in Great Britain, so the Labor Party candidates are chosen by local conferences. When a seat in the House of Commons becomes vacant and the local members of the Labor Party believe that it is worth while to fight for the election of a labor member, some union or Local Labor Party comes forward with a candidate and offers to pay the expenses of his campaign if the Labor Party will accept him as a nominee. The candidate may be a member of the union which nominates him or he may be some well-known national or local leader who is not a member of any union. The union or society which nominates him is not obliged to pay his election expenses, but the unions which nominate their own members quite frequently finance the campaign for election. Perhaps several candidates will be nominated by several different unions. The officers of the Local Labor Party see that the names of all candidates are sent to all the unions and societies which compose the Local Labor Party so that the members have plenty of chance to consider the candidates before making a choice. Then a Local Labor Party Conference is called at which delegates from all the local bodies choose the candidate by majority vote. The

candidate becomes official when he has been approved by the National Executive Committee of the Labor Party.

In this scheme of nominating candidates the individual members of the Labor Party are not forgotten. The men are organized into an Individual Men's Branch of the Local Labor Party and the women are organized into an Individual Women's Branch. They can suggest nominees and send delegates to the nominating conference in the same way that any other organization does.

The British system is different from the American in several respects. Candidates are required to deposit about $725 with the government at the beginning of the campaign, and if they fail to poll one-eighth of the total vote, the $725 is forfeited. For this reason the Labor Party does not nominate candidates in any district unless it is reasonably sure of polling one-eighth of the votes cast. There are 615 seats in the House of Commons but even in the General Election of 1922 the Labor Party did not nominate more than 415 candidates. The system of forfeiting the deposit of the small minority candidates makes it difficult for a new party to begin, but it has protected the British Labor Party from the many factional minorities who might have nominated candidates of their own if there had not been a financial penalty for failure at the polls.

According to the British law, the Labor Party or any other party may nominate a candidate from outside the district in which he seeks election. This makes it possible for the Labor Party to elect most of its national leaders to Parliament even if they live in London. When some national leader is defeated at the polls and the party wishes to make sure of his election, he may be assigned to a district which is more certain of a labor majority.

There is another marked difference from the American system. The local Labor Parties do not always choose

their candidates immediately before election. Often a constituency has a "prospective" candidate who may be chosen shortly after an election and approved by the national Labor Party. Such a candidate acts as a leader of the opposition in his constituency until the next election.

LEADERSHIP IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Does the Labor Party send its ablest men to the House of Commons? Until the election of 1922 the answer was No. Since that election the answer is Yes. Today some of the most distinguished writers, economists and lawyers represent the Labor Party in the House, together with 78 full-time trade-union officials and 13 manual workers direct from industry, out of a total representation of 144. Before the election of 1922 the charge was made that labor lacked able parliamentarians in the House, that it was represented by superannuated trade-union secretaries who were sent there by their unions as a reward for long service. There was some truth in the charge and the Labor Party leaders recognized the danger in failure as an opposition party. They made special efforts to win parliamentary seats for men who could combat the conservative leaders in political knowledge and strategy. As a result, men like Sidney Webb, Ramsay MacDonald, Arthur Greenwood, Patrick Hastings and Philip Snowden were returned to Parliament along with many other leaders of experience and technical training. MacDonald and Snowden had already served in Parliament many years. Under the leadership of Ramsay MacDonald, who succeeded J. R. Clynes as parliamentary leader, with Arthur Henderson as Chief Whip, the Parliamentary Labor Party stepped forth as a formidable opposition party.

The balance of power in the Parliamentary Labor Party rests with the trade-union officials, particularly the miners

who have 43 representatives, but there has been no fundamental clash of interests between the trade-union leaders and the intellectuals. The trade unions are in such complete control of the Labor Party that they could not stomach any political leaders who were not in complete sympathy with their views. So we find that in 1923, ten teachers, a dozen authors and journalists, two clergymen, two doctors and three lawyers held labor seats in the House of Commons. These figures included the representatives of the Co-operative Party which, for all practical purposes, acted as a branch of the Labor Party.

Most of the trade-union officers who occupy seats in the House of Commons continue to hold positions with their unions and draw salaries from both places. They need the double salaries since members of the House of Commons are paid only *$1,944 a year.

In the House of Lords the Labor Party has no representation, but there are a number of peers, notably Lord Haldane and Earl Kimmberly, who are sympathetic to the party's program.

THE LABOR PARTY AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

In the great struggle which has been going on in Europe between the socialists of the right and the left wing socialists or communists, the British Labor Party has taken a centrist position, and opposed the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Labor Party has not been unfriendly to Russia; in fact it has consistently opposed the Allied blockade of Russia, and has threatened a national general strike to prevent war with Russia. But it refuses to accept the terms of affiliation with the Third International, the organization of the socialist movement which was founded in Moscow in 1919.

*British money is valued at par in this book.

10 per week considered a very good wage
by Prices much lower than here.

The chief reason for the opposition to the Communist International is that the British workers do not favor the method of revolution adopted by the Communists. They are frank advocates of piece-meal revolution. They do not believe that the dictatorship of the proletariat will ever be necessary in Great Britain so long as the workers have freedom for political agitation.

They have expressed this attitude in the sphere of international relations by taking a leading part in forming the Labor and Socialist International founded at Hamburg in May, 1923. This International is an attempt to unite the labor and socialist forces of the world in opposing future wars and in spreading the gospel of international socialism. It is composed of those parties which aim to transform capitalist society by the democratic method, by parliamentary reform, including the Social Democratic parties of Germany, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Norway, Sweden and Finland, the Russian Mensheviks and the Socialist Party of the United States. The International opposes the methods of the Communist International and denounces the "continued use of terrorism by the Russian government," but it also "calls upon the labor movement to resist every form of intervention by capitalist governments against Russia."

The British Labor Party by its allegiance to this new International has pledged itself to act with the other labor groups of Europe in case of a new war. The constitution of the International reads "The Labor and Socialist International can only become a reality if its decisions in all international questions are binding upon its affiliated bodies. The resolutions of the International will therefore imply a self-imposed limitation of the autonomy of the affiliated organizations."

Only the future can decide whether this pledge of co-

operation in international affairs will be more successful than the similar pledge given by the European socialists before the war.

THE COMMUNISTS

The Communists are the red pepper of the British labor movement. In every important trade-union meeting or Labor Party conference their orators are on the floor demanding more revolutionary policy and denouncing the "conservatism" of the recognized leaders. They encourage and approve of "outlaw" strikes; they denounce parliamentary reform and stand for the dictatorship of the proletariat during the transition period between capitalism and communism.

In numbers the Communists are almost insignificant, perhaps one per cent of the British labor movement. The Communist Party which was founded in August, 1920, has only a few thousand members. It has elected one candidate to Parliament from Scotland where the communist movement is strongest.

The principles of the Communist Party are set forth in the resolutions adopted at its first National Convention:

(a) "The Communists in conference assembled declare for the Soviet (or Workers' Council) system as a means whereby the working classes shall achieve power and take control of the forces of production; declare for the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary means for combating the counter revolution during the transition period between Capitalism and Communism; and stand for the adoption of these means as steps towards the establishment of a system of complete Communism, wherein all the means of production shall be communally owned and controlled. This conference therefore establishes itself the Communist Party on the foregoing basis and declares its adherence to the Third International.

(b) "The Communist Party repudiates the reformist

view that a social revolution can be achieved by the ordinary methods of Parliamentary Democracy, but regards parliamentary and electoral action generally as providing a means of propaganda and agitation towards the Revolution."

The Communists, believing that they could capture the Labor Party better from within than from without, applied for admission to the Labor Party on the above platform. They were refused admission on the ground that "the basis of affiliation to the Labor Party is the acceptance of its constitution, principles and program, with which the objects of the Communist Party do not appear to be in accord."

When the Communist Party again applied for affiliation to the Labor Party in 1923 the application was rejected by an overwhelming majority. The Communist Party, however, has a considerable number of members who are working within the Labor Party as members of the larger organization. The Party has decided not to run candidates against the Labor Party candidates in the contests for parliamentary seats: the action is indicative of a spirit in the British labor movement which is absent from continental labor movements. The split between Rights and Lefts has not destroyed the unity of the movement: doctrines have been subordinated to activity.

Chapter 3

WHAT A LABOR GOVERNMENT WOULD DO

THE PROSPECT OF A LABOR GOVERNMENT

The ultimate triumph of a Labor Government is as certain as anything can be in the political world. Labor may come into power through the attainment of a clear majority in a General Election of members of the House of Commons, or it may come into power through the inability of any other party to command the support of a majority of the House. Most of the British labor leaders hope that the party will not be maneuvered into accepting office by default. The British parliamentary system makes it necessary for the cabinet to resign if its proposals for legislation, particularly important legislation, are rejected by the House of Commons. Unlike our legislative system, the cabinet is entirely dependent upon the will of the legislative branch of the government and every cabinet minister must be an elected member of the House of Commons. Under this system, the King usually sends for the leader of the opposition in the House of Commons in case of a government defeat, and this leader becomes Prime Minister if he can get a majority of the House behind him.

It is not likely that the conservatives of Great Britain will allow any Labor Government to assume power by default because of their bitter opposition to the Labor Party's program. A coalition with Liberals on the basis of agreement upon certain immediate reform measures is possible

only in case of the failure of any party to gain a majority in the House of Commons. Such a coalition is regarded as undesirable by leaders of the Labor Party because it would hamper them in carrying out any of the fundamental proposals of their economic program.

Although the Labor Party in 1923 held less than one-fourth of the seats in the House of Commons it polled one-third of the votes cast at the General Election and the turnover of less than two million votes was necessary to give Labor a majority. Only a decisive majority can give the party leaders a fair chance to carry out the full program because many of the labor members are absent so much of the time that a narrow majority might be easily overturned. The attainment of that majority would be delayed by the combination of all opposing parties into one conservative party.

THE FORMATION OF A MINISTRY

The first task confronting a Labor Government would be the selection of a ministry capable of handling the affairs of the British Empire. Obviously such men cannot be taken untrained from the mills and mines and thrust into places of grave responsibility. They must be experts in economics and administration. Where are they?

Many of them are in the middle class, teachers, civil servants, lawyers, statisticians and writers. The Labor Party has succeeded in drawing to its ranks many of the ablest leaders of the professions. These middle-class folk have made the party more than a class party. It is a party for all those who believe in a social order based on labor and co-operation. The brain workers, who at first felt out of place in the party, are joining it in increasing numbers. Even Bishops of the Established Church are on its roll. The suspicion of the manual workers has gradually been

broken down, as they have seen brilliant young men from Oxford, Cambridge and the other universities devoting their lives to the labor cause. This accession of the intellectuals has not only strengthened the position of the party in British life, but it has shaken the hold of traditional teaching upon the middle class itself. The power of revolutionary thought and the freedom for revolutionary expression are much greater in the British universities than they are in our American universities, partly because of the inroads of the Labor Party.

The unions also have many leaders in their own ranks who are quite capable of holding responsible government positions. Thousands of able trade unionists, as we will see later, have attended for years the classes of the Workers' Educational Association.

It has often been pointed out that the vital work of any government is done by its obscure civil servants. The Labor Party's accession to power would greatly expand the work of the government, but the routine work of the postal system, the schools, the highways and the taxation boards would go on much as before. Moreover, the great majority of the civil servants who would be called upon to carry on the work of the state under a Labor Government are members of unions themselves and bargain collectively with their employer. So the Labor Party would not be in the position of a conquering army assuming charge of a hostile city.

"THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE HOUSE"

In its famous platform of 1918, "Labor and the New Social Order," the Labor Party outlined the "Four Pillars of the House that we propose to erect":

1. Universal enforcement of a minimum living wage.
2. The democratic control of industry.

3. A revolution in national finance.

4. The use of the surplus wealth for the common good.

These four pillars have not been changed: they continue to be the main general planks in the Labor Party platform. The moment that a Labor Government came into power it would strive to put all of these principles into practice by certain definite pieces of legislation.

NATIONALIZATION OF THE MINES AND RAILROADS

Perhaps the first thing that a Labor Government would do would be to purchase the mines and railroads and to develop a publicly owned system of power supply. The compensation which was paid for these great public utilities would be partially taxed back into the government's pocket by income, inheritance and capital taxes. The reasons which the Labor Party advances for this immediate nationalization program can only be summarized here without analysis:

1. Private competition among the great railroads and mines is extravagantly inefficient. When the government needed real efficiency during the war it took over the operation of the mines and railroads and operated them as one unit for the benefit of the people.

2. No private owners have the right to control anything which is so vital to the common life as the railroads and mines. The value of the mines and the railroads is created by the people who work and the people who use their products. They should belong to the people, just as the schools, roads and post offices belong to the people.

3. Public ownership of the railroads and mines is a necessary step toward democratic management. The Labor Party does not aim merely to transfer the management of industry from the private owners to the state.

It aims to give the workers in co-operation with the community the control of the industries in which they work. This control is quite impossible without national ownership.

When a Labor Government has purchased the mines, railroads and sources of power, the next step would be the setting up of democratic machinery for the control of industry. The plan endorsed by the Labor and Socialist Congress at Geneva may be followed. According to this plan each nationalized industry would be controlled by a National Board of three sections:

1. The workers employed in the industry.
2. The management, including technical experts.
3. The community as consumers.

Under the general supervision of this National Board each factory or mine would have a Works Committee through which the management and workers would carry on the daily operations. By the complete elimination of the profit maker it is believed that the constant struggle between the working class and the owning class would be eliminated. The manager would no longer represent the interests of capital as against labor. He would be a public servant. The details of the plan could then be worked out in a spirit of genuine democracy.

It must not be assumed that all members of the Labor Party agree as to the methods of controlling industry after nationalization, but they are practically agreed on the two general steps which we have outlined—purchase of the railroads, mines and sources of power at the earliest possible moment, and democratic control by the co-operation of workers, consumers and management. The extent of the participation of the consumers in control is a matter of heated controversy.

OTHER INDUSTRIES

Since the Labor Party is a socialist party it is safe to assume that a Labor Government would attempt to nationalize gradually many other important industries besides the mines, railroads and sources of power. The order in which these industries would be nationalized is a problem of expediency. The ultimate aim of the party is to establish a society in which no person shall be allowed to earn a living without useful work. Such a purpose cannot be realized without national control of the land.

The Labor Party has come forward with a comprehensive land program for a Labor Government, which is discussed in the chapter on Labor and the Farmers. In that program the party demands:

1. A National Policy for Agriculture.
2. The Abolition of Landlordism.
3. Councils for Agriculture.
4. A Legal Minimum Wage.
5. Workers' Control.
6. Co-operation in Agriculture.
7. More cottages and none of them "tied."
8. The Abolition of the Game Laws.
9. Security of Tenure for all Occupiers of Land.
10. The Rating and Taxation of Ground Values, with a revision of the incidence of the local rates in relief of present burdens.
11. No protective tariff or other artificial raising of the Cost of Living.
12. Better Living as well as Better Farming.

WHERE THE MONEY WOULD COME FROM

It is obvious that a Labor Government could not buy the railroads, mines, power houses and much of the land

without having additional capital. Moreover, the British Government had a debt in the spring of 1923 amounting to almost 38 billion dollars.

How would a Labor Government pay the national debt and provide the funds necessary for a program of socialization of industry? By a revolution in the system of taxation. By the development of progressive direct taxation, including inheritance and income taxes.

First of all, the Labor Party severely criticizes the government for failing to meet the costs of the war by taxation rather than by loans. Two-thirds to three-fourths of government expenditure during the war was raised by loans rather than taxation. The war created hundreds of British millionaires who were allowed to keep the major part of their wealth; 3,620 millionaires who possessed about 9½ billion dollars before the war increased their wealth 3½ billion dollars during the war; 280 multi-millionaires who were each worth more than 4¾ million dollars before the war came through "the great sacrifice" with almost a billion dollars more than they had at the beginning. At least 10 billion dollars of the war debt of the British Government could have been paid during the war by confiscating the surplus profits directly due to the war.

A Labor Government would try to atone for the sins of omission of the coalition government by a new program of taxation.

THE CAPITAL LEVY

The financial leaders of the Labor Party do not believe that it is sufficient to levy taxes on income and on war wealth. Income taxes will not yield a sufficient return to lift the burden of debt in the near future, and taxation upon war wealth will exempt many of the largest fortunes in Great Britain which may have been "unearned" in a

more real sense than the war fortunes. Why not, says the Labor Party, tax *all* accumulated wealth above a certain small minimum? "The debt is a national burden which should be lightened by contributions levied upon individual possessors of wealth in accordance with their ability to pay."

So a Labor Government would undertake to pay a large part of the war debt by a capital levy in the belief that when this debt had been paid the national resources could be devoted to social improvements and the nationalization of great industries. The capital levy, which is really a levy on all "individual wealth, of whatever kind and however obtained," would be collected under the following conditions:

1. The levy should be devised to raise at least 13 billion dollars, a substantial part of the national debt. It should be levied on individuals and not on business concerns: for example, a stockholder of a corporation who owned more than a certain amount of accumulated wealth would have to pay a capital tax on the amount he owned. If he owned only a few dollars' worth of stock and nothing else, he would be exempt.

2. No one should be subject to the capital levy who owned less than $22,300 worth of property.

3. The levy should be graduated in such a way that the people who owned just a trifle more than $22,300 worth of property would have to pay only one per cent of the excess to the government while the great multi-millionaire might have to pay as much as fifty per cent.

4. Normally every person should have to pay his share of the levy within three years, one-third each year, but in cases where all the capital taxed was tied up in property, the time might be extended for a number of years.

Much of the money raised by a capital levy would simply

change hands without being withdrawn from British business. The Labor Party leaders believe that the redistribution would be a healthy thing for British enterprise.

It is not within the scope of this outline to judge the wisdom of the Labor Party's financial program, but it is clear that the Labor Party is facing the situation more squarely than the older parties. At present the Labor Party is winning the support of a large number of economic authorities because it is the only party with a program to meet the financial crisis. The financial policy of a Labor Government would be "radical," but even opponents of the party realize that a nation with a per capita debt of $775, a daily interest on the debt of over $4,000,000, and an army of unemployed may require something "radical."

A Labor Government would try to lighten the burden of taxation on the poor by abolishing food taxes. It is estimated that about 95 cents a week would be saved by the average family by removing the indirect tax on consumers. Moreover, a Labor Government would take a much larger portion of inherited wealth than is taken by the present government. Today, the more a man inherits from his ancestors the more he has to pay to the government. The Labor Party would go further than this. If a man inherited a great stretch of land from his father he might have to give 20 per cent of it to the government, but when he passed it on to his son the inheritance tax would be 40 per cent, and when it reached the grandson the government would take 60 per cent. The further the property went from the man who first owned it or earned it, the less would the heirs receive.

It is evident that taxation is the Labor Party's substitute for the Red Terror. It proposes to abolish the privileged classes of Great Britain by a sagacious use of the old-fashioned weapon of the Government Budget.

"REVOLUTION BY CONSENT"

Would the upper classes of Great Britain allow their wealth to be taken away from them by taxation measures passed by a Labor Government? Would they not prefer to completely ruin British industry by sabotage rather than see it socialized under a government hostile to their traditions? The Communist answers these questions by laughing at the naivete of the Labor Party leaders. "No upper class," he says, "will ever yield its position in the sun without resort to violence. The dictatorship of the proletariat will be necessary to prevent counter revolution by British conservatives."

The leaders of the Labor Party are, however, optimistic. The program which they propose is one of slow transformation and they are warning their followers not to expect a millennium in a night if the party attains possession of the government. They base their optimism upon the character of the British people and the resilience of the upper class. The people of Great Britain are notoriously law-abiding: their respect for democratic institutions is in sharp contrast to the careless contempt for politicians prevailing in America. The British upper class is already beginning to adjust itself to the coming of a Labor Government: when Lord Birkenhead in the House of Lords in 1923 warned his colleagues of "the red menace" of the Labor Party, he was given a very cold reception. This does not mean that a revolution in the economic and political life of Great Britain is likely to come with the support of the upper classes: the aristocracy of the nation is almost solidly arrayed against labor. But the idea of the democratic method in government is almost as strongly rooted in Great Britain as the idea of the capitalist system itself. If labor can marshal the forces of democracy against the old eco-

nomic order, it may be that the world will witness in Great Britain its first revolution by consent. Probably there is more chance of such a revolution in Great Britain than in any other nation. Moreover, the British people are not entirely unfamiliar with socialized industry since both the national government and many municipalities have experimented in this direction.

Whether the society which the Labor Party plans to build will be permanent or workable can be determined only by the event. The conservatives declare that it will destroy human efficiency by taking away the initiative of private enterprise: the Labor Party replies that it will only deprive the exploiters and manipulators of some of their spoils.

WAR AND ARMAMENT

A Labor Government would be a pacifist government. While it would not abolish the army and navy, it would carry out a drastic reduction of armaments and strive to settle all international disputes by negotiation or through a world court.

The attitude of the Labor Party at a critical time was indicated by resolutions passed by the 1923 conference concerning the invasion of the Ruhr, the question of German Reparations and the expansion of the British Air Force.

THE RUHR

"The Conference protests against the occupation of the Ruhr district by the French and Belgian military forces as an act of aggression and of war. It calls upon the Government to use every effort to induce the parties concerned to come together in negotiation or to submit their differences to an impartial tribunal. It considers that the recent offer of the German Government should be taken as a basis for

negotiation, and calls upon the Executive Committee to continue its efforts to secure united recommendation on the subject from the Socialist Movements of the countries concerned.

REPARATION AND THE PEACE

"The Conference renews its repeated declarations on the Reparation question. It considers that the claim based on military pensions is contrary to the pre-armistice agreement, and for that reason, and in the best interests of France and Belgium, should be abandoned; that reparation should be limited to the restoration of the devastated districts of France and Belgium; that this country should adopt a generous attitude in the matter of inter-Allied debts, as part of a general settlement of the reparation problem; that the whole of the Allied armies should be withdrawn immediately from German territory; and that a World Conference should be held to revise the Peace Treaties in accordance with the needs of European political and economic reconstruction.

"The Conference views with alarm the possibility of a division between the French and British peoples, and the danger of a new race in armaments, especially in the air forces, between France and Great Britain.

AIR FORCE ARMAMENTS

"That the proposed increase of the British Air Force in competition with France is a preface to a new era of war, and the Labor Party calls upon the Parliamentary Labor Party to offer every resistance; declares that it is a crime against humanity to promote this new race of armaments within five years of the end of the last war which the peoples of the world hoped was the beginning of an era of peace, and demands that an international conference should

at once be called by Great Britain for the purpose of reducing and eventually abolishing by international agreement all air armaments."

Would a Labor Government vote against all military appropriations? That question came up for discussion at the 1923 conference of the Labor Party and a proposal to commit the leaders in Parliament to opposition to every military budget was defeated after a heated discussion. Facing the possibility of taking over the government, the leaders declared that they did not wish to be bound by any proposal so drastic until disarmament becomes international. Their policy is one of peace, but they wish to maintain some military defenses until other nations have disarmed.

A Labor Government would unquestionably take a leading part in world disarmament by international agreement if America, France and other nations would co-operate. One of its first proposals would be to forbid the private manufacture of munitions on the theory that government manufacture of munitions can be more easily controlled by international agreements.

LABOR AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The Labor Party has championed the League of Nations from the time of the first proposals of Woodrow Wilson. The party has, however, bitterly fought the Treaty of Versailles and has advocated many changes in the League of Nations Covenant. The changes which a Labor Government would attempt to secure in the League of Nations Covenant are:

1. The immediate admission of Germany and Russia on equal terms with other nations.
2. Complete revision of the peace terms.
3. The right of minorities to be represented with the majority representatives in League Conferences.

The resolution concerning the League of Nations adopted at the Trades Union Congress at Cardiff in 1921 and moved by J. R. Clynes expresses labor's attitude toward the League:

"This Congress reaffirms its previous declarations regarding the constitution of the League of Nations, and demands a reorganization of the League in such manner as will provide the fullest opportunity for the adequate democratic representation of all nations, if they are to be preserved from the catastrophe of another world war. This Congress declares that permanent peace can only be secured by the creation of an international body possessing the confidence of the people of each country, which can only be secured by adequate direct representation of Labor on the Council of the League. This Congress instructs the General Council to take steps to secure popular support for this policy, and obtain the united national and international aid of organized labor in support of the establishment of a League of Nations fully representative of the people, and recognizing the rights of all nations without regard to either influence or power."

The International Labor Office of the League of Nations has received the hearty support of the Labor Party although the British Government has not even supported all of the measures which its own representatives voted for at the four international labor conventions which were held from 1919 to 1922. The International Labor Organization of the League of Nations, which is governed by a body of 24 representatives, 12 from the governments and 6 each from organized labor and organized employers, has prepared many draft conventions concerning the eight-hour day, unemployment, the minimum wage for children, and other industrial conditions. Although many of these draft conventions have not been accepted by the constituent governments, a valuable piece of pioneer work has been done in attempting to prevent the worst evils of international

competition. "The International Labor Organization," says Ramsay MacDonald, "is not what the organized workers would have made it if they had had the making of the peace. The machinery needs to be tightened up and speeded up. But it is there, a part of the public law of Europe and an instrument which the European democracy can use. We must not let it be scrapped because the reactionaries find it working in the interests of democracy and the good of the world."

LABOR AND THE EMPIRE

Although a Labor Government might abolish the House of Lords, there is no indication that British Labor intends to establish a Republic. The King is recognized as a permanent part of the government. Although the political power which he possesses is not negligible, it is exercised in so small a circle of government officials that the people do not realize its importance. He is regarded as the human symbol of the empire, a symbol to be kept as long as the empire endures.

At the 1923 session of the Labor Party Conference a motion to advocate the abolition of the monarchy was voted down by a large majority amid laughter. The issue of monarchy versus republic is regarded by most labor leaders as a side issue that can well take care of itself if labor comes into power. Meanwhile the king is described in labor circles as a genial mascot.

Labor wants to retain the British Empire as a democratic world power. In its official pronouncement on the continuation of the Empire the Labor Party says:

"With regard to that great Commonwealth of all races, all colors, all religions, and all degrees of civilization that we call the British Empire, the Labor Party stands for its maintenance and its progressive development on the lines

of Local Autonomy and 'Home Rule All Round'; the fullest respect for the rights of each people, whatever its color, to all the Democratic Self-Government of which it is capable, and to the proceeds of its own toil upon the resources of its own territorial home; and the closest possible co-operation among all the various members of what has become essentially not an Empire in the old sense, but a Britannic Alliance."

With regard to Egypt and India this means a larger measure of self-government for each of these colonies but not their complete independence if the Labor Party can prevent it peacefully.

LABOR AND PROHIBITION

The sentiment of the British workers is overwhelmingly "wet." Great Britain's drink bill in 1921 was almost two billion dollars and the per capita consumption of intoxicating liquors in that year was almost twenty gallons. Men and women, particularly of the working class, frequent the "pubs" in great numbers. The Special Committee of the Labor Party authorized to make a report upon the Liquor Trade to the 1923 conference declared that out of a total working class income "which can hardly have exceeded 1,000 million pounds, we may infer that at least 200 million pounds was spent on this one item of alcoholic beverages." This one-fifth of the income of the 9 million British manual working-class families "appears to be about as much as the whole of the rent that they pay for the cottages and tenements which now constitute their homes. It is more than the whole of the purchases at the Co-operative stores of the one-third of these families who form the co-operative membership. It is probably ten times as much as all the wage earners pay to their trades unions and friendly societies."

The Special Committee of the Labor Party went on to

say that in spite of the obvious evils of the liquor traffic "We see no sign that the British people are at all likely to be willing to vote, even by a mere majority, for a measure of national prohibition within any space of time that we can usefully consider. We do not think that any such measure even if enacted by a majority of votes could possibly be put in force generally unless there had already taken place such a change in opinion and such a transformation in personal habits as would inevitably have led to the adoption of other measures of reform . . . which might possibly have transformed the problem."

The Special Committee declined to favor any single plan of reform beyond the advocacy of local option favored by the official Labor Party platform which reads:

"The Labour Party sees the key to Temperance Reform in taking the entire manufacture and retailing of alcoholic drink out of the hands of those who find profit in promoting the utmost possible consumption. This is essentially a case in which the people, as a whole, must assert its right to full and unfettered power for dealing with the licensing question in accordance with local option. For this purpose, in conjunction with any expropriation of private interests, localities should have conferred upon them facilities at their own option:—

(a) To prohibit the sale of alcoholic drink within their own boundaries;

(b) To reduce the number of places of sale and regulate the conditions of sale; and

(c) To determine, within the fundamental conditions prescribed by statute, the manner in which the public places of refreshment and social intercourse in their own districts shall be organised and controlled."

Chapter 4

HOW THE WORKERS ARE ORGANIZED

THE POWER OF THE UNIONS

There are more than twice as many members in trade unions in Great Britain as there are in the United States in proportion to population. Almost every industry has its union or unions with recognition and collective bargaining. The membership of unions affiliated to the Trades Union Congress increased from one million in 1895 to six and one-half millions in 1920. During 1921 and 1922 there was a serious loss in union membership because of unemployment and the financial depression but there were no indications that this loss would be permanent. The 1922 figures showed about five million union members.

The Federation of British Industries, the largest employers' organization, representing 16,000 firms and over 19 billion dollars of capital, in its official report on the control of industry, says: "The principles of trade union representation and collective bargaining are now fully accepted by employers." British employers do not use the term collective bargaining to mean dealing with "Company Unions" or employees' organizations set up by the employers themselves. There are virtually no "Company Unions" in Great Britain, except the organizations of foremen and supervisors. Most British employers bargain directly with their employees as members of a national or district labor union. It is generally recognized that the workers have the right to choose their own representa-

tives without restriction. They are usually represented in negotiations with employers by their own elected union officers who are specialists in gathering and presenting information about the trade.

"We should call a man a backwoodsman who refused to deal with organized labor," said one of the great employers recently; "collective bargaining is a permanent fact in our industries."

Organized labor has become a recognized part of the national life. During the war, labor union leaders sat in the Cabinet. When the Government needed to appeal to labor, it appealed to the unions; when labor commissions and committees were chosen, they were always composed of union men. Most of the government's employees belong to recognized unions.

THE UNION SHOP

While the struggle between capital and labor in Great Britain is intense and often bitter, it is waged upon a different plane from the American industrial struggle. The question of the union versus the "open shop" is not a vital one in most British industries because the employers do not use non-union workers to break the power of the unions. Collective bargaining and the principles of the union shop are taken for granted in the key industries. There are a few industries in which the unions are fighting a life-and-death struggle constantly, but they are not the largest or most important industries. The restaurants, for example, are still on the fringe of the world of collective bargaining, but the railroads, mines, building, cotton manufacture, steel and other vital industries are dominated by union workers. In several of these industries practically no non-union workers are employed. In others there are a number of unions and the workers have a choice among them. As

in America, the unskilled workers are the last of the manual workers to be organized, with the result that strong craft unions may be found working with unskilled non-union labor. The competition between unions and the constant overlapping of similar organizations tends to prevent the 100 per cent organization of industries, but the principle of the union shop prevails. In general the workers are free to join any union of their choice without discrimination and British employers have not attempted in recent years an "open shop" movement. This does not mean, however, that the British employers live in harmony with the unions. On the contrary, they are constantly fighting the demands of unions and condemning many union policies, but their attack is generally directed against the policies of unions rather than the existence of unions. They assume that the unions and collective bargaining have come to stay.

The nearest approach to a deliberate union-smashing drive upon the part of British employers in recent years occurred in 1922 when the machinists were locked out in many industries by a powerful federation of employers who demanded "freedom of management," the right to order overtime without the union's consent, and the right to make workshop changes without prior agreement with the unions concerned. After a long and bitter struggle in which the union's funds were completely exhausted, the employers won, but they did not use their victory to destroy the machinery of collective bargaining or to declare for an "open shop." They attempted to operate their shops with volunteer workers during the lockout but they failed. They failed in spite of the fact that the lockout lasted eleven weeks in one of the most terrible periods of unemployment in the history of Great Britain.

The strength of the unions' hold upon industry has been

demonstrated during the conduct of great strikes. In the coal strike of the spring and summer of 1921, over 1,000,000 miners were on strike, and approximately 3,000,000 other workers were unemployed, but no one seriously suggested the use of strike-breakers in the mines. In the nine days' railroad strike of 1919 comparatively few strike-breakers were found to operate the trains, and these few were largely recruited from the sons of the middle and upper class who had never previously done manual labor. These examples are typical. The working-class "black leg" (the English term for strike-breaker) is rapidly disappearing from industrial life.

THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS

The supreme body of the British unions, and the most "extensive federation of the trade union world," is the Trades Union Congress. It corresponds to the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor with one leading exception. It is even more inclusive than the American Federation of Labor since it includes virtually all of the unions of power and importance in Great Britain: there are no railroad brotherhoods or clothing workers outside its ranks. The few unions outside the Trades Union Congress are small local unions or professional associations which lie on the border line between the middle class and the working class.

The annual session of the Trades Union Congress is the industrial parliament of labor. Delegates from all parts of Great Britain come to express their views on the broad general questions which interest the whole labor movement. The Congress, like the American Federation of Labor, has no power to call a strike or to impose on the local unions any definite policy. It has less power than our American Federation because it has no full-time president and staff

of organizers. It is controlled by the votes of the delegates who have power in proportion to the number of members they represent.

THE LABOR GENERAL STAFF

A movement has been going on for some time among the workers to create a more effective central organization than the Trades Union Congress and its Parliamentary Committee. It is obvious that a Congress of nearly 1,000 delegates gathered together for five days a year to discuss vital problems should have some smaller representative body to act for it continuously. In the past that smaller representative body was the Parliamentary Committee. At the 1921 session of the Trades Union Congress the Parliamentary Committee was disbanded and a General Council created representing every branch of trade unionism.

The General Council marks a tremendous forward step in the development of British labor: it has been appropriately dubbed "The General Staff" by the newspapers and the name is sufficiently accurate to stick. It has a negative and a positive purpose. Within the labor movement it aims to settle the many disputes between unions concerning the overlapping of functions. In meeting the common enemies of trade unionism it aims to "formulate a common policy and secure the maximum of common action." If some union is following a policy that endangers the whole labor movement, the General Council must bring that union to its senses. If some captains of industry attack the weakest point in the trade union defenses the Council must attempt to concentrate re-enforcements at that point.

The Council was not created for the purpose of conducting a general strike, but it is easy to see that it makes

possible the mobilization of all the workers in a general strike if the occasion demands. It has within its ranks the leaders of the workers in all the vital industries and if those workers chose to act together through the General Council they could paralyze British life. It is divided into six sections which are in form not unlike the departments of the American Federation of Labor, each section including those trades which are naturally allied to each other. In one section are the miners, railroad workers and transport workers, possessing in themselves the power to revive the lost glory of the Triple Alliance. The whole Council is composed of thirty-two members elected every year by the Trades Union Congress.

In addition to this General Council which represents the industrial side of the labor army there is a "super-General Staff" of fifteen members which binds together the Labor Party, the Trades Union Congress and the labor members in Parliament. In this National Joint Council there are five members from each of these three wings of the movement, including the chairman and secretary of each group.

Although the General Council and the National Joint Council have been in existence for several years their power is still very much limited and they are scarcely as effective in dealing with routine labor problems on the industrial field as the departments of the American Federation of Labor. The chief reason for this weakness is the fact that the Trades Union Congress has never limited its membership in each trade to one union as the American Federation of Labor has done. When there are several competing unions in the same trade recognized by the labor movement the effect is to weaken the power of a central body. Moreover, the great British unions are jealous of their powers and they do not want any central body to direct their policies except in the most serious emergencies.

At the 1922 and 1923 sessions of the Trades Union Congress proposals to give the General Council more power were voted down after stormy debates.

THE BIG FOUR INTELLECTUAL MACHINE

In many battles on the industrial and political field the workers have found themselves face to face with a government and an employing class which had unlimited sources of information and tremendous propaganda power. They found that statistics and headlines could be hurled at them with all the deadly effect of a hand grenade and they had no effective reply. So the Trades Union Congress and the Labor Party have set up four special departments to manufacture mental dynamite for the labor movement. These departments are:

The Department of Research and Information
The Department of International Affairs
The Publicity Department
The Legal Department

When the unions are involved in a wage negotiation and they need statistics, they turn to the Research Department. At the time of a great strike when the public must be informed about the unions' side of the controversy, the Publicity Department puts on the desk of every important editor the facts which seem most significant to the labor movement. The public and the employers are made to feel that they cannot dismiss the claims of labor as the dreams of uninformed extremists. Labor is able to come before royal commissions and place private owners on trial, as it did before the Coal Commission. Through the Big Four Intellectual Machine some of the ablest investigators and writers in Great Britain are able to strike their blows for labor.

In addition to the official research department of the

labor movement there has been established an independent Labor Research Department, supported by unions and individuals, which has produced many valuable labor studies.

THE GREAT UNIONS

The real authority in the labor world rests with the national and local trade unions which are controlled by the votes of their members. These national and local trade unions do not yield to the Trades Union Congress, the General Council or any other body the control of their policies. They may agree to a policy adopted by the Trades Union Congress but they are not bound by their rules or constitution to obey it.

The unions are organized in so many different ways that it is impossible within the scope of this review to enumerate them all. In general they are democracies ruled by the majority vote of the members: some of them are simple democracies of the town-meeting type and some are so highly centralized that the officers are able to virtually dictate all the policies.

There are a number of union federations which are more important than others and which contain a very large percentage of the entire union membership. They include:

The National Federation of Building Trades Operatives
The Iron and Steel Trades Confederation
The National Printing and Kindred Trades Federation
The Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades Federation
The National Association of Unions in the Textile Trades
The Northern Counties Textile Trades Federation
The United Textile Factory Workers' Association.

Some of these federations are little more than organizations on paper, others approach to One Big Union in their industry. The National Federation of Building Trades Operatives, for example, bargains for its members in mak-

ing national wage agreements. The United Textile Factory Workers' Association rarely bargains for its members but performs chiefly the work of a propaganda organization. Some unions belong to two or more federations at the same time. For example, the carpenters are affiliated to both the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives and the Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades Federation.

On the whole the great federations of unions present the spectacle of amalgamations half completed. Most of them will not have national control of their industrial fields until the unions composing them decide to abandon their jealousies and combine.

Probably the most powerful unions in Great Britain are:

The Miners' Federation of Great Britain
The National Union of Railwaymen
The Transport and General Workers' Union
The Amalgamated Engineering Union
The National Union of General Workers
The Workers' Union.

Of these unions the Miners' Federation stands out as the largest. It has a membership of eight hundred thousand. It is not a federation of national unions, as the other federations are, but a combination of eighteen district unions which do not overlap each other. Next in importance to the Miners' Federation stands the National Union of Railwaymen. If British labor takes any decisive forward step in the industrial field in the future, the leadership is likely to come from the miners and the railwaymen.

THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

The most notable alliance of trade unions in the history of British labor was the Triple Alliance of miners, railwaymen and transport workers which collapsed during the great

coal strike of 1921. It possessed the power to paralyze completely the life of the nation, and so long as it held this power as a potent threat of action it struck fear into the hearts of the employing class. But the attempt was made to bring its full power to bear in behalf of the miners before the members and leaders of the other unions in the alliance were convinced of the wisdom of a general strike. The Triple Alliance failed because the workers had not carefully prepared their own defenses.

If the Triple Alliance is ever revived it will probably be as an integral part of the General Staff. By its life and death it taught the workers the need of efficient generalship and careful planning to maintain the solidarity of the labor army.

THE GENERAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

The national mutual benefit society of the British labor movement is the General Federation of Trade Unions. Its chief function is to protect the workers against the risks of strikes and unemployment. It had in March, 1921, over 1,500,000 members who paid into its treasuries through their unions a certain tax and who received in return either strike benefits or unemployment pay or both. Its membership declined rapidly in 1922 and 1923. The General Federation of Trade Unions for a number of years represented British labor at the sessions of the International Trade Union Federation, but the Trades Union Congress now elects its own delegates to these sessions. In recent years the General Federation of Trade Unions has been a storm center in the British labor world. It has been bitterly fought by the Miners' Federation and other important groups with the result that its influence appears to be declining.

THE "WHITE COLLAR WORKERS"

The unions are making significant inroads upon the middle class, upon all those members of "the black-coated proletariat" who until recent years considered themselves distinctly superior to ordinary workers. The teachers are organized in several powerful associations which have adopted many of the ideals and methods of trade unions, although they are not affiliated to the Trades Union Congress. Over 100,000 teachers belonged to the National Union of Teachers in 1921. The union has gone so far as to support several teachers' strikes. Ordinarily these professional associations which are on the border line of the labor movement are not as militant in declaring strikes as the unions of manual workers, but they have succeeded in bringing much pressure upon employers and government to improve the wages and working conditions of the brain workers. The National Federation of Professional, Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Workers which is composed of unions catering to brain workers has definite trade union aims and is not committed to an anti-strike policy.

The development of unionism in the post-office provides an interesting comparison with American conditions. After a twenty years' battle the post-office workers won complete recognition and collective bargaining in their dealings with the government. They have formed several powerful bodies, the chief of which is the Union of Post-Office Workers which had, in 1922, 65,000 members and was affiliated to the Trades Union Congress. The aggresiveness of this union is shown by the demands adopted at one of its conventions:—

Joint management of the post-office by the workers and the State.

A five-day week of 38½ hours.

More pensions and longer holidays.

Thousands of school-janitors, clerks, prison officers, journalists and life insurance agents, who in the United States would consider themselves outside the field of union organization, are members of British unions.

Attempts to organize the London police have been defeated although a large membership was secured for a Police and Prison Officers' Union and two strikes were called. But in almost every other branch of Government service unions have been successfully formed and have won not only recognition but improved conditions for their members. The Government has agreed to arbitrate wage disputes with its organized employees in the same way that disputes are arbitrated in privately owned industries.

Among the office workers and shop clerks organization has progressed slowly. The Railway Clerks' Association had 55,000 members in 1923 and had won the right to include inspectors and stationmasters. The fight for the organization of bank clerks is now going on and the Bank Officers' Guild has a considerable membership. A Society of Technical Engineers has been formed as a trade union for industrial experts.

In some parts of the mining, textile and other industries foremen have formed unions of their own and affiliated with the regular trade unions, in spite of the opposition of employers. For example, the National Foremen's Association of the Engineering and Allied Trades, with a membership of about 3,000, and 56 branches, allied itself with the Trades Union Congress.

The drift of the brain workers toward the British labor organizations is significant. In any future program of workers' control the manual workers must rely very largely upon the loyalty and sympathy of the men and women

who are now serving as technical experts and administrators.

THE AMALGAMATION MOVEMENT

In spite of its tremendous scope and power, the trade union movement of Great Britain presents the appearance of a crazy quilt to an observer, because of the large number of competing unions which overlap each other's fields of operation. Although there are many internal jurisdictional disputes in the American labor movement the American Federation of Labor will not recognize more than one union in any one trade. The British Trades Union Congress, however, recognizes any number of competing unions in the same field, and thus far has not prevented their formation. Girl workers in an overall factory may be found as members of a dockers' and general laborers' union. There are over 150 trade unions represented in the cotton industry. However, it is easy to misrepresent the labor movement by quoting the number of different unions in any one trade without pointing out that in many trades the unions act together in all important matters and have very real unity. Although there are over 1,000 unions registered in Great Britain more than three-fourths of the membership of the unions is to be found in twenty-two combinations, and the tendency for the unions is to amalgamate wherever the difficulties are not insurmountable.

Several great amalgamations of unions have taken place in recent years which indicate the trend toward unification. The new unions formed from many smaller unions include:

The Transport and General Workers' Union (completed in October, 1921)

The Union of Post Office Workers

The Amalgamated Engineering Union

The National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers.

The two last are especially significant. The Amalgamated Engineering Union absorbed one of the oldest and strongest unions in Great Britain, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. The National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers absorbed the workers of the co-operatives who had formerly been members of the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees.

One of the chief tasks of the new General Council has been to encourage and direct this process of union amalgamation. In 1922 and 1923 the General Council called conferences to encourage amalgamation in the metal, textile, insurance, postal, printing and hosiery trades. Several new amalgamations may be expected as a result of the General Council's work and the demand of the rank and file for more labor unity.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

The Trades Union Congress sends delegates to the sessions of the International Federation of Trade Unions (the Amsterdam International) and through this International attempts to maintain co-operation with unions on the continent. But it has not been very successful in developing effective co-operation with continental unions partly because of the internal strife which is going on throughout the European unions over the question of affiliation to Moscow.

Representatives of the Red Trade Union International in Great Britain have conducted vigorous propaganda in behalf of their organization, but according to their own estimates not more than five per cent of the organized workers ever became friendly to the Red International.

British labor is now looking to America as it never did before. Every year delegates from the Trades Union Congress and the American Federation are exchanged. The

British workers are anxious to form a real alliance of the working classes of the two English-speaking peoples not only because such an alliance would have tremendous power in enforcing union standards but because the economic future of Great Britain and the United States are bound up together. Low wages and long hours in America lead to low wages and long hours in Great Britain: economic depression in Great Britain leads to unemployment in the United States.

Unfortunately, there is now no international organization combining British and American labor. The American Federation has withdrawn from the Amsterdam International to which the British workers are affiliated.

Chapter 5

UNION TACTICS AND POLICIES

Because the labor movement is a living thing its policies are constantly changing. It cannot be said that any one description of policy applies to all the British unions or to any one union over a long period of time. But there are certain general characteristics of policy which we will examine in this chapter.

DIRECT ACTION

The British Labor Movement has two great weapons, the strike and the ballot. In the early days of the labor movement it was natural that the ballot should be of little importance in accomplishing the aims of the unions. What the workers wanted then, and still want, was a living wage, shorter hours or better working conditions. For the accomplishment of these ends the strike has always been more popular and more effective than the ballot. But as the movement has grown in power the desires of the leaders and of many of the rank and file have broadened. They are not content with a living wage. They want what is virtually a transformation of the capitalist system of production into a co-operative system in which the State shall own the great public utilities and the workers shall manage all industries.

How shall this revolutionary change be accomplished? By the strike or the ballot? In general the leaders of British labor would reply "By both. We will use the ballot

for political transformation at the same time that we are judiciously using the strike weapon for industrial changes." The result has been that the British labor movement has developed its political activity side by side with its industrial activity.

The use of the strike as a weapon for other than purely industrial purposes is commonly described as "direct action." It does not, as some people suppose, signify the use of violence, but if carried to the extreme of a general strike it may quite naturally lead to a choice between the surrender of the employing classes or the suppression of the strike by violence. The use of violence is far from the mind and heart of the British worker. He is a lover of peace and order. He will not use direct action for the overthrow of the present social order unless every alternative of political action has failed.

The wide-spread opposition to direct action as a weapon with which to gain political ends was demonstrated in the great coal strike of 1921 when the Triple Alliance was shipwrecked on the issue of the miners' pool. But the destruction of the Triple Alliance upon this issue does not mean that the labor movement rejects the strike as a weapon for certain grave political emergencies. The strike will always be labor's strongest weapon for the redress of local grievances. It may also be used against war or the threat of war.

The threat of direct action by the entire labor movement in 1920 prevented a war with Russia. When the possibility of a declaration of war by the government against Russia became apparent, the Trades Union Congress and Labor Party called a great emergency conference attended by over one thousand delegates. These delegates created a Council of Action with power to call a general

strike in case the government declared war. Needless to say, the government did not declare war.

The history of the British labor movement shows that the pendulum of popularity swings back and forth from industrial action to political action, depending upon the economic situation of the country. In the period of frantic commercial expansion immediately after the war industrial action was universally popular. Strikes were uniformly successful because the employers wanted labor and were willing to pay high wages to get it. In the great industrial depression which later engulfed Great Britain and the Western world strikes fell into disfavor and the pendulum swung toward a Labor Parliament.

RESTRICTION OF OUTPUT

The capitalists of Great Britain have advertised widely their opposition to restriction of output by the trade unions. The whole question of restriction of output has been the center of such heated controversy that it is impossible to discover the facts about the actual amount of restriction. Two facts, however, are generally accepted: the unions do not officially restrict output by trade union regulations, and there is a considerable amount of unofficial restriction of output. Whether the organization of the workers is the cause of the restriction of output is a matter of controversy. The workers when charged with restriction of output reply that their own restriction of output is small compared to the automatic restriction of output which occurs whenever an employer limits the production of goods in order to maintain or increase the price of his product.

The restriction of output by the workers takes two forms:

1. Working slowly.
2. Resisting changes in methods of work, particularly changes from time work to piece work.

The causes for this restriction of output have been enumerated by various labor leaders and employers:

1. The workers have a constant fear of unemployment which drives them to lengthen out the tasks assigned to them and "make the job go around." Great periods of over-production in the past have been followed by terrible periods of unemployment which have created the conviction in the workers' minds that they "should not work themselves out of a job." Efficient production will be impossible until the workers have security.

2. Many employers in the past have been guilty of unscrupulous cutting of piece rates after they persuaded their workers to speed up. The workers have responded by deliberately restricting their output to an agreed amount because they felt that in the end they did not profit by increased production.

3. Employers have installed many improvements and changes in industry without consulting the workers. The workers have resented this deeply and have often opposed the changes because of the method of their introduction.

4. The natural inertia of human beings leads them to oppose any change in working unless they can see a distinct advantage for themselves. This is particularly true of the veteran English craftsman who has learned to love the methods of his craft.

5. Increased production usually means the subdivision of labor to the point at which work becomes mechanical and monotonous.

6. The feeling of class loyalty in a workshop may be so strong that the more able workers will restrict their production in order that the less efficient workers shall not be discharged.

7. The capitalist system of production does not provide sufficient motive for increased production by the workers.

Many of the most intelligent workers have come to believe that they are foolish to work for the private profit of employers who often do no useful work.

Many able employers are partially solving the problem of restricted output by absolute fairness in adjusting piece rates and by co-operation with the unions in the introduction of scientific methods. But the problem of motive in production is still unsolved. The education of the workers is increasing their unwillingness to spend their lives in the service of private employers particularly when they see that the wealth which they create is often wasted. This is particularly true among the miners, as Justice Sankey pointed out in his report recommending the national ownership of the mines: "the relationship between the masters and workers in most of the coal fields of the United Kingdom is, unfortunately, of such a character that it seems impossible to better it under the present system of ownership."

Labor's Joint Committee to investigate the Cost of Living which reported in the summer of 1921 summed up the labor attitude toward restriction of output in these words:

"The reason for the restriction of output on the part of the workers is to be found in the industrial system itself. Until there is security of tenure for the worker in industry, occasions will arise when 'ca'canny' will appear the lesser of two evils. The worker, therefore, must be assured of work or maintenance. Moreover, we shall not get the maximum of production until the industrial system is brought more closely into harmony with the wishes of the mass of organized workers. In the twentieth century, it is no longer possible to expect efficient service from a system which is outworn, and which is repugnant to a large section of those whose co-operation is essential to its working."

HOURS AND WAGES

The chief energy of British unions is centered upon winning higher wages, shorter hours and improved working conditions for their members. While a militant minority is interested chiefly in revolutionary change, the masses of the workers look upon the unions as instruments for gaining immediate economic advantage.

British labor regards the 8-hour day as its most sacred possession.

The unions have succeeded almost universally in winning the 48 hour week and in many instances they have won the 44 hour week. The miners lead all others in the fight for shorter hours, since the Coal Commission awarded them the 7 hour day. Their time of labor does not average more than 39 hours a week, and the time which is taken in going from the mine entrance to the face of the coal is reckoned in this 39 hours. This means that many of the miners do not work at the face of the coal more than 34 hours a week.

The hours of work of many branches of industry have been listed by the Ministry of Labor:

Machinists	47 hours.
Building Trades Workers	44 hours.
Bakers	48 hours.
Textile Workers	48 hours.
Railway Workers	48 hours.
Paper Mill Workers	48 hours.

Even in the lowest paid and most poorly organized industries, with the exception of restaurants, the hours of labor have been generally reduced to 48 or less.

The unions have won enormous increases of wages for their members but the wages of British workers in general are much below those of American workers. No accurate

comparison is possible because of the differences in the cost of living but it is indisputable that the British workers receive a much lower money wage than American workers and a somewhat lower real wage. Millions of British workers are not yet earning a living wage. Some of the figures of wage scales even in highly organized industries are appallingly low.

Typical rates of wages for skilled and unskilled workers at the end of 1922 have been collected by G. D. H. Cole. Painters and carpenters were receiving $17.12 for 44 hours: skilled machinists were receiving $13.80 for 47 hours: compositors were receiving $19.32. The wages of unskilled labor were proportionately less, particularly in unorganized sections of trades (See Chapter on Trade Boards). Building laborers were paid $12.84 for 44 hours and machinist laborers received $9.72 for 47 hours. These low wages were partially the result of the great industrial depression but even at the peak point after the war they were very low in most trades as compared to American wages for skilled labor. The standard weekly wage for railway engineers of more than six years' experience in the opening months of 1921 was about $26.40. First-class bricklayers, carpenters and masons at that time received about $24.60 in the best-paid districts. Girls employed in making coffins could not be paid less than $3.60 a week!

The miners have suffered more than other workers from the industrial depression in England. In the early part of 1923 the highest paid miners were averaging about $18 a week while the lowest paid were averaging about $10.80 a week.

THE SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES

About 2,750,000 British workers were working in 1923 under a wage system commonly called the sliding scale.

Their wages were adjusted to the cost of living automatically. When the index number of the cost of living prepared by the Ministry of Labor went up, their wages rose accordingly. When the index number went down, their wages went down.

In determining the cost of living the Ministry of Labor makes a list of things which a working class family has to buy. These include food, clothing, rent, fuel, light and sundries. The cost of each one of these items is weighted according to the proportion of the family wage which is spent on that particular item. If the family must buy twice as much sugar as salt, the price of sugar is given double the importance of the price of salt in arriving at the index number.

The 2,750,000 workers whose wages were adjusted in 1923 according to this sliding scale are scattered in eighty different industries or branches of industries. In general the sliding scale system has been successful in almost every type of industry. It has been applied to building, railway service, textile manufacture, the metal trades and many other industries.

The most important industry to adopt the sliding scale has been the railway industry. The National Union of Railwaymen has entered into an agreement with the owners of the railroads whereby the wages of its members will rise or fall twenty cents a week for every rise or fall of five points in the index number of the cost of living. The adjustment of wages takes place four times a year on the 1st of January, the 1st of April, the 1st of July and the 1st of October. The change is based upon the index number for the preceding month.

The workers, of course, do not want to restrict their wage advances to the cost of living since they believe that their standard of living should constantly grow better. But the

unions have accepted the sliding scale as a protection from ruthless wage cutting by employers and as a means of preserving industrial peace. The sliding scale system adopted by many unions in times of prosperity has been widely extended during the industrial depression when a dispute over wages might prove disastrous to large sections of industry.

A storm of discussion was created in labor circles in 1921 when a committee of distinguished labor investigators reported that the index number of the cost of living used by the Ministry of Labor underestimated the cost of living. The labor committee declared that the cost of living had gone up 189 per cent from July, 1914, to September, 1920, while the Ministry of Labor claimed that the increase was only 161 per cent. The Trades Union Congress demanded the alteration of the plan of reckoning living costs in accordance with the findings of the labor committee, but the Ministry of Labor replied with an able defense of its own index number.

An outlaw dockers' strike broke out in the summer of 1923 in many of England's chief ports because the dockers were asked to take a wage cut based upon the decrease in the cost of living as indicated by the index figure of the Ministry of Labor. The Transport Workers' Union had made an agreement to accept the sliding scale of wages and the union officials stood by their agreement and finally persuaded the dockers to return to work.

So the plan of adjusting wages according to the cost of living has survived severe tests and has won the support of most of the labor unions which have experimented with it. The official opinion of the Trades Union Congress and Labor Party upon this subject was given in 1923:

"The Cost of Living Sliding Scale offers, on the whole, and subject to certain conditions, a net balance of advantage to the worker, because

(a) it eliminates the friction and waste consequent upon the effort to make money wages overtake rising prices;

(b) it therefore leaves Unions free to concentrate upon an improvement in real wages.

The conditions to be observed are:—

1. A satisfactory Cost of Living Index Number should be available.

2. Every scale should provide for *full* compensation for higher cost of living, whatever the basic rate may be.

3. No scale should be agreed to except on the understanding that it is without prejudice to claims for basic increases."

WAGES BASED ON PROFITS AND PRICES

A number of British industries adjust wages by sliding scales which have no connection with the cost of living. The wages of the miners, according to the agreement which they were forced to sign after their defeat in the strike of 1921, are determined by the profit of the mine owners. If the mines are prosperous, the miners share in the prosperity. They receive 83 per cent of the proceeds left over after certain standard wages have been paid, other costs of production have been met and the employers have received a "standard" profit amounting to 17 per cent of the standard wage bill. The employers cannot go below a certain minimum wage at any time but if they do not get their standard profit in any period, the deficit is carried forward and becomes a first charge on all future surplus.

Whatever the merits of this plan may be in theory, it has proved disastrous to the miners during the financial depression. The British mining industry has had many of its best markets taken away from it with the result that profits, wages and surpluses have gone down and the miners

in the less productive regions have been close to the starvation point all the time.

The iron and steel industry has used for the last fifty years a sliding scale of wages based upon the price of the product. For example, the wages of steel smelters rise or fall 1¼ per cent every time that the price of one ton of steel ship plates rises or falls 60 cents. There are many complexities and variations in the scheme as it is applied to sections of the iron and steel industry but the principle is the same. The plan seems to have been successful in this industry and there is no great demand on the part of either the employers or unions to change it. But the plan of adjusting wages according to selling price has not spread to other industries and it is not generally popular with the workers because it makes them partners in the industry without giving them any voice in management. The Trades Union Congress and Labor Party in their report on this subject sum up the objection in these words: "The sliding scale in question is based on the theory that supply and demand should determine the workers' wages, while the general trade union view is that an adequate wage for all workers should be a first charge on the industry."

THE SHOP STEWARD MOVEMENT

Practically all organized British workers bargain with employers through their trade union officials. Because of the large number of unions in the same industry this type of collective bargaining sometimes proves slow and ineffective. During the war, especially, the British workers felt the need of more speed in bargaining and more effective representation of industrial units. They organized works' committees headed by shop stewards to represent all the workers in the shops and in many cases they took into their own hands the functions formerly exercised by trade union

officials. They conducted a number of local strikes during the war and received much attention from the press.

The shop steward was not unknown in British industry before the war. Several trades, notably the printing trade, had developed the shop steward system to a point of efficiency. But the war created a new demand for local shop leaders and the rank and file produced these leaders for the emergency. There was nothing official or organized about the movement: it was spontaneous and local in character. The workers found that they were being disregarded too often in the readjustments of industry during the war and they took things into their own hands.

The shop steward of British industry is analogous to the shop chairman of American trade unionism but in America the shop chairman of such industries as the men's clothing industry have more power and recognition than was ever accorded to the shop stewards of England. In England the shop stewards were rarely recognized by the union officially: in America they are perhaps the most important officials of the union with the power to collect dues and adjust complaints in the shops.

The shop steward movement had a temporary and a permanent meaning. It was a struggle to maintain some vestige of the rights of labor which were being sacrificed during the war for the sake of national safety. The union leaders were tied hand and foot by their pledges to the government. They could not declare a strike without risking penalties under the Munitions Act, so the workers in some cases fought their battles against the orders of the national union leaders.

The permanent significance of the shop steward movement lay in its emphasis upon workers' control in the shop. It succeeded for a time in winning for shop chairmen more power than they had exercised before. It expressed the

conviction of many workers that the increase of power centralized in the hands of national union officials could never be as important as the increase of the power of the workers in the management of their industries.

Today the shop steward movement is officially dead but a considerable part of its doctrine has been absorbed into the main body of the labor movement.

CORRUPTION

Graft and corruption among labor officials is practically unknown in the British labor movement. The least suspicion of dishonesty is enough to end the career of any leader. In such an atmosphere the workers rarely accuse their leaders of corrupt action and the unions do not find it necessary to be on guard against capitalist spies in the role of labor officials.

THE UNION LABEL

The union label has never been widely used by British unions. Only the felt hatters and cigar makers use it. The absence of the union label in most industries may be ascribed to several special conditions which are not present in the United States.

There are very few industries in which the workers are all members of one union. In a textile factory in which there are four unions, which union shall affix its label? That problem is so difficult of solution in many industries that the workers would scarcely find it worth while to raise the question of the union label. Moreover, in the United States the union label is not only a means of identifying union made goods but is a symbol of the affiliation of the workers to the American Federation of Labor, and consequently a means of fighting unions outside the

federation. In Great Britain there is no such compelling unity of union organization and the Trades Union Congress has not considered it necessary to fight against the unions which are not affiliated to it.

Another reason for the absence of the union label is the fact that millions of the workers are already organized as consumers in the co-operative movement. When they have become sufficiently class conscious to reason about the sources of production, they naturally become members of the local co-operative society and buy goods which are union made, distributed by union workers and sold without profit. For such workers the union label is quite unnecessary.

In general British labor is so strongly entrenched that it does not feel the need of appealing to consumers by the use of the union label. Perhaps this feeling is strengthened by the fact that a large proportion of the consuming public is in foreign countries where the British union label has no appeal.

THE UNIONS AS BENEFIT SOCIETIES

Many of the unions are not only fighting organizations but insurance and benefit societies. They perform for their members the functions performed by fraternal societies and lodges.

All unions are supported by a per capita tax levied on the members. In return for this per capita tax some unions give only the general protection of the union in the shop and the services of paid officers, but most of the unions add to these benefits special pay in time of strike or lockout or pay in case of discharge for union activity. Many unions include in their benefits unemployment insurance in addition to what the government pays, funeral benefits, sickness insurance and accident insurance. The benefits

are not usually large and the payments are correspondingly low. Few union members pay more than 48 cents a week for dues and benefits; some women pay as low as five cents a week but it is obvious that when such low payments are made, the benefits are very small. In general it cannot be said that the financial position of unions is strong because they may at any time be called upon to spend the savings of many years in a long strike or lockout. This was true of the largest and strongest union in Great Britain, the Miners' Federation, which used nearly all of the funds of its constituent organizations in paying unemployment benefits and strike relief in 1920 and approached the great strike of 1921 virtually penniless. Because of this condition the 900,000 miners in the organization went through the thirteen weeks of the strike with less than four dollars each for the entire time.

The benefit policy of the unions has two marked effects. It tends to attach to the unions the men and women who want the benefits as a protection against sickness, unemployment and old age. The policy develops a kind of compulsory loyalty which may be very valuable to a union at a time of crisis when its supporters are wavering. It also tends to make the union conservative and hesitant about entering upon a strike which may cost it millions of dollars.

WORKERS' CONTROL

The ultimate purpose of the British labor movement as embodied in scores of resolutions at Trades Union Congresses and Labor Party Conferences is co-operative ownership and workers' control of industry. The movement for workers' control without co-operative ownership is quite meaningless since the workers do not want merely the con-

trol of those functions of industry which are temporarily put under their authority by the present owners.

At present the movement for workers' control is chiefly a matter of words and ideals. Whenever the British workers demand from the employers some peculiarly vital forward step toward control they encounter the blank wall of ownership. The miners in 1921 presented a logical and humanitarian plan of pooling profits and wages so that the workers in the poorest paid districts could share the better wages of the more prosperous districts but they were defeated in their struggle by the owners who refused to tolerate this interference with their prerogatives. The present skirmishes going on between employers and unions for the control of employment conditions, methods of wage payment, the right of discharge, etc., are only echoes of the larger and more significant struggle for complete control of industry.

The extent of workers' control in any given section of British industry depends on three things: the power of the unions in that section, the general economic conditions, and the benevolence of the employers. The unions seize as much power as they can, and keep it as long as possible. If the employers are benevolent and far-sighted, as they are in the cocoa and chocolate industry, they gladly cooperate with the workers in developing and extending the workers' collective power. With most employers, however, there is no desire to give more control to the workers than they now possess. So there is a constant advancing and retreating of the forces of capital and labor on the battle front of control. In times when labor is scarce and wages are high the workers have great power in controlling hours, wages, working conditions and discharge. In times of depression as in 1922 and 1923 union standards tend to break

down slowly and the control of almost all aspects of industry passes into the hands of the employers.

The control of the workers has thus far been negative. They have had the power to say to the employer what shall be the limits of his authority in certain directions but they have not won for themselves any positive rights in the management of industry. It seems that the most advanced unions have gone as far as they can toward workers' control without solving the problem of ownership. The miners and railroad workers, for example, demand a control of the mines and the railroads which cannot be established without public ownership of these industries. It is quite natural, therefore, that they should not develop a coherent plan for workers' control within the system of private ownership since they are working to abolish that system and build a more democratic one.

LABOR AND THE PRESS

The labor movement has not yet developed a press commensurate with its needs or its present power. It is true that the very strength of the labor organizations protects them against the worst excesses of anti-labor publicity, but the great British newspapers are giving currency to ideas which strengthen the hold of the present masters of industry at a time when labor is trying to shake that hold. Labor has no daily newspaper outside of London. The London Daily Herald, owned by the Labor Party, has a national influence though its circulation is not more than 250,000. An excellent official monthly, The Labor Magazine, began its career in 1922 as the organ of the Labor Party and Trades Union Congress. The Manchester Guardian, Britain's great independent newspaper, has been of immense service to the movement by its honest and fair presentation of labor's point of view. The New Statesman,

a London weekly, is playing a part in moulding opinion analogous to the part which is played by the American weeklies—the Nation and the New Republic.

There are scores of small weeklies and monthlies published by the unions for the special benefit of their own members, and several influential papers published by branches of the Labor Party. The Independent Labor Party publishes the Glasgow Forward, the New Leader, the Leicester Pioneer and the Myrther Pioneer. The Social Democratic Federation, another branch of the Labor Party, publishes Justice, and an independent group publishes the powerful socialist weekly, the London Clarion. The co-operative movement is represented by two lively journals, The Co-operative News and The Millgate Monthly. The Socialist Review and The Labor Monthly are published independently.

The Press Department of the Labor Party is seeking to build up a national news service for unions and local labor parties through its Weekly Labor Press Service. It sends to scores of independent, socialist and labor weeklies twelve columns of labor news and articles every week arranged in such a way that the material can be used as "filler" for the local paper or as the framework for a local labor journal with blank spaces for the printing of local news. It is also doing an important service in supplying labor news for the great national dailies.

The unions have realized that in a national emergency, such as a mining or railroad strike, intelligent publicity in the newspapers may be more important than strength of organization or overflowing treasuries. In the nine days' railroad strike in 1919 the National Union of Railwaymen spent nearly $5,000 a day in getting the case of the railroad workers into the newspapers. On the third day of that strike the N. U. R. spent almost $25,000 for publicity

with the result that there was a noticeable drift in public sentiment to the strikers' side. Many distinguished writers aided the railwaymen with magazine and newspaper articles. Not the least of these was Bernard Shaw, who wrote handbills. In the miners' strike of 1921 the miners spent $25,000 on union publicity through the Press Department of the Labor Party. The labor movement as a whole is realizing as it never did before the importance of influencing the public mind through the press.

Chapter 6

LABOR AND THE LAW

Although the position of British labor under the law is not entirely clear, it is far more favorable than the position of labor under the American constitution and courts. The present legal position of labor has been secured by a century of constant struggle. Practically every right now conceded to the labor movement by parliamentary legislation was denied to the unions by the courts until a strong public sentiment was created by agitation and education.

VIOLENCE

The British labor movement has no parallel in recent years to the mob violence of West Virginia, Bisbee, Arizona, or Ludlow, Colorado. Lynch law and "Citizens' Committees" are practically unknown and rioting in time of strike is rare. This is partially due, no doubt, to the absence of large sections of alien workers who may create so much race prejudice that peace is impossible. But other more powerful factors prevent violence in labor disputes today. British employers have learned through long experience that violence does not pay. Accordingly they rarely hire armies of armed guards and attempt to bring in strike-breakers during industrial disputes.

During the miners' strike of 1921 over four million workers were on strike or unemployed and public feeling was intense, but there was virtually no violence. In the great railroad strike in 1919, 128 football games were played

between the government troops and the railroad strikers *for the benefit of the strikers.* The history of British labor shows that the British worker is an opponent of violence. The traditions of British life are opposed to violence; even the policemen do not carry guns in the day time.

Sidney Webb summed up the British attitude toward violence when he said at the 1923 Labor Party Conference: "Violence persuades no one, convinces no one, satisfies no one . . . violence may destroy but it can never construct. Moreover, in our practical British way we can see that by the very nature of the case violence can be much more easily and effectively applied on the conservative side, to keep things as they are because this requires only acquiescence, than on the side of change."

THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

British workers are now secure in the legal right to organize trade unions after one hundred and twenty years of struggle. One hundred years ago the Combination Laws made membership in a labor union a crime. In 1812, five Scottish weavers were convicted of the crime of forming a union and sent to prison because they went on strike against their employers in supporting a wage scale that had been set by the courts themselves. Although the Combination Laws were repealed in 1824, the British courts for many years visited such heavy penalties upon union members for trifling offenses that unions were retarded in their growth. When the unions finally won the right to organize the British courts practically destroyed that right by their famous decision in the Taff Vale case, which allowed an employer to sue a union for damages resulting from a strike. Under this decision the unions were in danger of being held responsible for damages to an employer's business done by any member of the union, even if the mem-

ber was doing nothing criminal, and even if he acted in defiance of the rules of the union. By continued agitation the unions finally forced through Parliament the Trades Disputes Acts, which is on the statute books today.

Under the Trades Disputes Acts and older laws the workers not only have the right to organize but the unions cannot be sued for damages because their members injure the employer's business by going on strike. This last provision was absolutely necessary for the existence of militant unions. Individual members are, of course, still liable for any crimes which they commit: the law does not allow any man to commit a crime in time of strike with impunity. But when workers act together in quitting work during a trade dispute the law says that they are not doing anything which is more illegal than the act of an employer in closing his plant for a time. If an employer cannot be sued for the loss of wages during a lockout, it is only reasonable to provide that a union cannot be sued for the losses to an employer involved in a strike.

It is notable that in British law the "right to organize" includes the right to persuade a fellow worker to break his contract with his employer in pursuance of a trade dispute. If the unions did not have this protection employers in poorly organized industries could compel every worker who obtains employment to sign a contract agreeing to non-union conditions. After such a contract was signed the union organizer who persuaded a worker to strike for better conditions would then be guilty of conspiracy to violate a contract. In the United States he could be sent to jail for contempt of court: in Great Britain it would be impossible to send him to prison and he could not be held legally liable if he persuaded workers to violate their contracts in time of a strike. This does not mean, however, that "the yellow dog contract" pledging workers to refrain from

joining a union is unknown in Great Britain. Moreover, there is one exception to the rule that a union organizer cannot be punished for persuading workers to break contracts in time of trade disputes. That exception is the contract of a seaman. In addition to this limitation of the rights of seamen, another class of British labor is deprived by law of the right to organize or to strike. British policemen are forbidden by the Police Act of 1919 to join any trade union or to take part in any trade dispute. Any police officer who permits any act calculated to cause disaffection in the police force is guilty of a criminal offense.

THE RIGHT TO STRIKE AND PICKET

The right to strike is obviously a necessary part of the right to organize. The unions cannot exist unless they have the legal right of quitting work in concert and of paying strike benefits. There are no laws on the British statute books to prevent strikes, with the exception of the Police Act already noted. There has been no serious attempt to impose compulsory arbitration upon the British workers because even the most conservative employers know that the labor organizations would resist to the point of revolution before surrendering the right to strike. It is true that during the war labor surrendered virtually all of its rights, including the right to strike. Labor conscription was considered necessary in the national emergency, but now that the national emergency has passed, the Trades Disputes Act and older laws give full protection to the unions and to their treasuries in time of strike.

The right of picketing has also been established by national legislation after years of struggle in the courts. The Trades Disputes Act gives the pacific right to workers of informing and peacefully persuading strike breakers to join the strikers: "It shall be lawful for one or more persons

acting on their own behalf or on behalf of the Trade Union, to attend at or near a house or place where a person resides or works, or carries on business, or happens to be, if they so attend merely for the purpose of peacefully obtaining or communicating information or of peacefully persuading any person to work or to abstain from work." The picket line, however, does not play as important a part in the British strike as it does in the American strike, because of the greater difficulty in obtaining British strike-breakers.

THE EMERGENCY POWERS ACT

The British upper class holds one legal trump card for use in time of a great strike—that is, an Emergency Powers Act passed in the autumn of 1920. Under this Act in time of a railroad, transport or mining strike, or any other important strike, the government is given full power to take any steps that it considers necessary to supply the public with food, fuel, light and safety. The powers are so wide that an anti-labor government might use them to recruit strike-breakers and destroy union standards. The law declares that a state of emergency exists when "any action has been taken or is immediately threatened by any person or body of persons of such a nature, or on so extensive a scale, as to be calculated . . . to deprive the community, or any substantial portion of the community, of the essentials of life."

To bring the Emergency Powers Act into force the Government must issue a public proclamation. The act cannot continue in force more than one month after the proclamation. Any number of proclamations may be issued and approved by Parliament. Labor is given three safeguards in this Act:

1. The Government cannot compel any man to work or to serve in the military forces.

2. Labor retains the right to strike and to peacefully persuade others to strike.

3. Citizens cannot be fined or imprisoned without trial.

Twice during the coal strike of 1921 the government brought the Emergency Powers Act into effect, when it seemed likely that the whole Triple Alliance would strike. It called to the colors the reserves of the Army, Navy and Air Forces and started to recruit a special Defence Force "in order to support the police in providing adequate protection to the volunteers who were maintaining the mines in condition," and to operate the railroads as strike-breakers.

This action of the government was strenuously opposed by the labor movement. In Parliament before the bill became a law, leaders of the Labor Party asked that the measure should guarantee to labor all the rights granted in the Trades Disputes Act, but the government refused. The Labor Party has been fighting the law ever since.

As the law now stands the government has the power in time of "national emergency" to practically suspend the work of unions which, in the opinion of Parliament or the Ministry, are a danger to the public safety. The Emergency Powers Act exempts persons from imprisonment without trial, but it does not exempt unions and their treasuries from restraining injunctions.

The Webbs in their "History of Trade Unionism" declare that in the railroad strike of 1919 "it was known that measures of arbitrary confiscation of the Union funds were seriously under consideration, together with discriminatory issues of food supplies." It is not surprising, therefore, that labor regards the powers of the government with grave suspicion.

This is particularly true because scores of striking miners were arrested under the regulations of the Emergency Powers Act during the coal strike of 1921.

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE COURTS

Although the British workers are law-abiding, it cannot be said that they are friendly to the Courts. Almost every advance in the legal status of Trade Unions has come in spite of the Courts through Parliamentary action. "For the most part," says G. D. H. Cole, "the judges are entirely out of sympathy with the Trade Union Movement, which they still tend to regard as an unwarrantable interference with the 'liberty of the subject.' This being so, Trade Unions must always expect under present conditions to have statute law illiberally interpreted, and case law accordingly weighted heavily against them. Their only redress in such circumstances is to wring fresh legislation from Parliament every time the Courts perpetrate a new injustice."

BOYCOTTS, INJUNCTIONS AND FREE SPEECH

British labor is practically exempt from attack by the the two great legal weapons which have been used against American labor—the injunction and the anti-boycott decisions. Injunctions are frequently used by the courts, but they are not used to send labor leaders and strikers to jail without trial by jury, and to prevent picketing. If a British labor leader or strike picket is accused of committing an act of violence he is brought before an ordinary court in which he has the legal rights given to citizens everywhere. Judges rarely attempt to issue sweeping injunctions which may send men to jail for contempt of court without trial by jury.

The boycott has the same position in British law that the strike enjoys: any person may agree with any other person or persons to refrain from buying goods from any merchant. Union members cannot be punished for "secondary

boycott," as they were in the United States in the case of the Danbury Hatters, provided they are engaged in a trade dispute. They may boycott a non-union firm directly or they may boycott a firm which does business with a non-union firm.

There is much greater freedom of speech in the British labor movement than there is in the American labor movement. The red flag is conspicuously displayed at Communist meetings: gatherings of strikers are not prohibited because some local authority believes that they may be dangerous. The Communist Party has not been forced underground although its gospel is the same as that of the American Communist Party which has been outlawed in the United States. Its orators may be heard on any Sunday afternoon in Hyde Park calling upon the people to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. Moreover, there is nothing in England to compare to our criminal syndicalism laws which make it possible for a man to be arrested for carrying an I. W. W. card.

Chapter 7

WOMEN AND LABOR

THE INVASION OF INDUSTRY

The war accelerated the movement of women into industry in Great Britain, as it did in other nations. One million women took the places of men who went to the fighting front. They performed tasks which had always been considered men's work with astonishing success: they accommodated themselves to the latest machine processes often more successfully than men. They served as street car conductors, munition-makers, and railway workers. Ten thousand women worked at the pit-heads of the mines during the latter part of the war. It is estimated that over 3,000,000 women were employed in industry just prior to the war, not including domestic servants and women in small dressmaking places; that this number increased to nearly 5,000,000 before the armistice, and fell to 4,000,000 at the end of 1920. The numbers decreased steadily from 1920 to 1923 because of the financial depression. Of the one million women who returned to their homes after the war, there are many thousands who would doubtless remain in industry if the opportunity afforded and who can be counted among the workers' reserve available for British industries. The surplus of nearly two million women over men makes the probability of marriage of many of these women workers less than it was before the war.

Since the industrial revolution women workers have been

ruthlessly exploited under the factory system. Women have rarely received the same pay as men for doing the same work. During the war, although the Government agreed to the principle of "equal pay," this was interpreted to mean equal pay only for women piece-workers who did the same work as men. Women day workers were paid far below the male standard and every possible subterfuge was used to alter the mechanical processes in such a way that women could not receive men's pay. Until the period of increased wages during the first year of the war, women were paid wages which now seem appallingly low. Forty per cent of the women in sugar and confectionery trades were working 65 hours in 1913 for $2.40 a week. At the beginning of the war women were found making soldiers' bags in London for 36 cents for a 12-hour day.

WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Although the wages of women are now much higher than before the war, they are rightly considered a national disgrace. Women can be found in British restaurants working for $1.80 a week. Hundreds of thousands of factory girls are working for less than $8 per week.

The influx of women into industry is partially caused by the practice of leaving school at an early age. Few girls of the working class attend school beyond the age of fourteen and some are able to get permits to work in factories under the age of fourteen if they continue a part of their school work. The result is a great amount of child labor at very low rates of pay. Although, as we shall see later, the Trade Boards have been able to greatly improve the working conditions of women, there is no national minimum wage. The principle of a minimum wage was accepted by the Coalition Government in the summer of

1919, but no definite action was taken. Meanwhile the period of industrial depression gave an opportunity to many employers to still further reduce the wages of women workers.

Women have no government protection against long hours in the stores and restaurants, except that girls under eighteen cannot work more than 74 hours a week! In the textile factories women cannot work more than 55½ hours by law, and in other factories not more than 60 hours a week. Women are prohibited from working in factories at night, but this law does not apply to stores and restaurants. The unions, however, have generally secured the 48-hour week for women members.

WOMEN IN THE UNIONS

Women workers have slowly learned that their only protection is to be found in trade unions. Since 1914 there has been an amazing growth of women's memberships in unions: up to that date there were never more than 350,000 women in the unions: at the beginning of 1920 there were 1,328,000 women in the unions. The growth of trade unionism among women was due not only to the growth of unionism among men but to the entrance of women into skilled trades during the war. Many skilled women who served as substitutes for men learned for the first time the advantages of a union scale of wages. When they went back to their own trades they carried the union spirit with them.

Women have belonged to British unions since the eighteenth century, but they have taken little active part in leadership. A few women delegates attend the Trade Union Congress, but their voices and votes are comparatively weak. Even in the great textile unions around Manchester

where the women are in the majority, they do not assume the leadership of the unions and they are rarely to be found on Executive Committees. This is partly due to the ancient habits of the submission of women and partly to the active opposition of men's unions to the entrance of women into their trades. It must be admitted that there has been in the past some justification for the opposition. In the earlier days of unionism women workers were used by the employers to reduce wage scales and even to break strikes. The fact is obvious that an eighteen-year-old factory girl who lives at home is a menace to the wage standard of a man with five children if she is able to do his work with any skill. Ultimately the problem may be solved by adjusting wages to the number of persons dependent upon the wages, but until such an Utopian scheme is adopted, cheap female labor will continually menace the living standard of British workers.

The general policy of trade unions has been to meet the problem by demanding equal wages for men and women workers doing approximately the same work, but in actual practice they have rarely been able to enforce any such regulation. In many trades certain sections of the work are set apart for women workers and the wages of this type of labor tend to drop far below the wages of the men. Only the cotton weavers have been able to enforce the single standard of wages over a period of many years. This is explained partially by the highly developed state of labor organization among women weavers and partially by the piece-work system which makes equal pay practicable. The weavers' standard is a high one for women but a comparatively low one for men, whose apparently weak position is sometimes attributed to the presence of so many women in the trade.

General Staff called the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organizations which includes the women of the Labor Party, the co-operative movement, and nearly all the important unions. The scope of this organization will be seen by a review of the bodies represented on it:

Women's Co-operative Guild
Railway Women's Guild
Labor Party
National Union of General Workers
Workers' Union
Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers' Union
Railway Clerks' Association
Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries
Union of Post Office Workers
National Union of Clerks
Fabian Society
National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks.

The S. J. C., as it is called, has carried on active propaganda for all legislation desired by women, including mothers' pensions, children's courts, the care of unmarried mothers, etc. It has secured the appointment of more than sixty women magistrates of the Labor Party whose duties are similar to the duties of an American Justice of the Peace.

Chapter 8

WHITLEY COUNCILS AND TRADE BOARDS

Collective bargaining and arbitration have been common in Great Britain for fifty years. Many industries have developed arbitration machinery of their own which is quite as efficient as any machinery developed by the government. The two most notable examples of arbitration machinery fostered by the government are the Whitley Councils and the Trade Boards.

THE WHITLEY JOINT COUNCILS

There were in 1923 about seventy Joint Standing Industrial Councils in many different British industries for the settlement of problems arising between employers and employees and for the making of agreements on matters of common interest. Over 2,000,000 workers came under their jurisdiction. These Joint Councils are commonly called Whitley Councils from the name of the Chairman of the Commission which drew up the plans for procedure that were adopted by the government.

The distinctive feature of the Whitley Councils is that they are purely voluntary groups of organized employers and workers met to settle their differences without lockouts and strikes and to develop means of co-operation. The workers are not compelled to accept Whitley Councils in any industry and the employers are not compelled to co-operate. If either side is unwilling to use the Councils,

the machinery automatically breaks down. The machinery was set up during the war when the maintenance of peace in industry was essential for the support of the British Army.

According to the plan of the Whitley Committee there are three main divisions of the Whitley machinery:

Joint Industrial Councils covering an entire industry.

District Councils.

Works Committees.

These three divisions of conciliation machinery have been worked out differently in different industries, but there are certain general policies common to all Whitley Councils.

The National Joint Councils which are chosen by the associations of employers on the one hand, and the trade unions on the other, may elect an independent chairman who has the deciding vote in disputes, or they may elect an employer chairman and a worker vice-chairman, or vice versa. The vote of the employers' representatives and the union representatives is equal. Ordinarily a decision is not final unless it is approved by a majority vote of both sides of the Council. Neither the unorganized workers nor the unorganized employers are represented in the National Joint Councils because it is believed that the Councils would be unworkable unless they were confined to responsible representatives of organized groups.

The National Councils have a very wide field of activity in matters of industrial relations but they do not exercise any control of the industry as a whole. Their chief purposes are to—

1. Regulate wages, hours, and working conditions in the industry on a national basis.

2. Regularize employment and production.

3. Establish machinery for settling disputes wherever such machinery is not already established.

4. Bring the workers in the industry into unions and the employers into employers' associations, so that both sides of the industry will be collectively responsible.

This last purpose is especially significant. The Whitley Councils have never been used by the British employing class as a substitute for unionism. One result of the setting up of the Councils has been the considerable increase in the membership of the unions and of the employers' associations and a greater prestige for both.

The District Councils are convenient sub-divisions of the National Councils and the Works Committees are the joint organizations of employers and employees in local plants. The amount of wages and hours is usually determined by the national organization: the Works Committee attempts to put the national regulations in practice with the least possible friction. The Works Committee also has charge of a large number of the details of industrial relations. Some of its functions are to—

Issue and revise factory rules.

Determine how the hours shall be distributed, e. g., whether the plant shall run from 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. or from 7 a. m. to 4 p. m.

Agree on holidays.

Settle questions of discharge and discipline.

The Works Committees are based on the recognition of the unions and if non-union workers are represented it is only by the consent of the Joint Council for the industry. If the national representatives of the unions detect any effort on the part of the employers to introduce non-union workers in preference to union workers, they can refuse to act with non-union workers in the conciliation machinery.

HOW THE WHITLEY COUNCILS HAVE WORKED

In actual practice the Whitley Councils have extended the principles of collective bargaining already established in most of the great organized industries. They have been helpful to labor because they have developed the habit of collective action in many industries which were formerly disorganized on both the employers' and workers' sides. They have prevented a great many disastrous industrial disputes.

But the success of the Whitley Councils is directly dependent upon the strength of the unions. If the unions are not strong enough to compel an employer to join an employers' association and to accept the union standards for the industry, the employer can stand alone. The conditions in his establishment will then be determined by the power of the unions and the general economic conditions. Many of the great employers, while participating in the Whitley Councils, refuse to discuss the larger financial and business questions of their enterprises with the workers. In some industries, notably in pottery and building, the Councils have been particularly successful in developing co-operation between employer and employee. But almost every industry in Great Britain has some section of employers who are outside of the employers' associations and who cannot be persuaded to accept a national standard of wages. The presence of these employers is a constant menace not only to the living standard of the workers but the financial strength of the socially minded employers who must compete with them.

Accordingly the Whitley Councils are faced with this difficulty. If there are certain sections of an industry weakly organized, the employers in that section can undermine the prosperity of the employers who accept the rulings of

the Council. If the industry is highly organized, the unions have their own highly developed machinery for collective bargaining.

In meeting the first condition, many critics of the Whitley Councils believe that they should be given power to extend any wage agreement to an entire industry even if there are certain sections of that industry which now refuse to come within the jurisdiction of the National Council. Such a provision would require an act of Parliament compelling employers to accept the rulings of the Whitley Councils as law. In the unsettled economic life of post-war Europe, when employers are using all their powers to reduce wages and when workers are on the defensive, it is not likely that such a law will be passed.

The miners, machinists, railwaymen, cotton workers and other groups have not adopted the Whitley Councils largely because they have satisfactory bargaining machinery of their own. The Councils have not tried to replace this machinery but rather they have sought to co-operate with the unions and the employers' associations outside of their ranks. The unions, therefore, are not unfriendly to the Whitley Councils, but they do not regard the Councils as a permanent solution of the strife between capital and labor. The leaders of the unions want a more extended control of industry than the Whitley Councils are able to give them. When the time for demanding that larger measure of control comes, the workers know that economic and political power will determine the issue.

THE TRADE BOARDS

The government after much agitation by labor organizations has taken definite steps to establish a living wage in industry through the Trade Boards. The Trade Boards, set up under the Trade Boards Acts of 1909 and 1918, are

industrial boards composed of employers, workers and public representatives which maintain minimum wage scales for the imperfectly organized industries. They are more significant and powerful than the Whitley Councils. Unlike the Whitley Councils they are official bodies which have the power to enforce the minimum wage scale on all the employers in an industry. In the autumn of 1921 there were more than sixty Trade Boards in Great Britain and Ireland, devoting their efforts largely to industries in which women were employed, but fixing minimum rates of wages for the men as well as the women employed in these industries. They covered about three million workers.

The Trade Boards which were first applied to the "sweated industries," lace-making, chain-making, wholesale tailoring and paper-box making, have now been applied to a wide range of industries with the result that wages have been raised in every case. The Boards are composed of an equal number of workers and employers with three or more members appointed by the Ministry of Labor. The Trade Board in the wholesale tailoring industry is an example: it is composed of thirty workers, thirty employers and five appointees of the Ministry of Labor. One of these appointees must be a woman. The Ministry of Labor tends to nominate distinguished professors, economic experts, and social workers who accept a nominal payment for their services.

After investigation the Trade Board establishes a minimum wage by majority vote. By this method the best employers have a chance of voting with labor to force the worst employers to adopt a human standard. In selecting their representatives the workers are not limited to their fellow workers or to their trade-union officials but they can select men of special industrial knowledge. When the wage has been decided upon, each side is given two months

to file protests with the Board. At the end of the two months the scale is either revised or indorsed, and if indorsed, it becomes a legal minimum wage for the industry. Any employer who refuses to pay the minimum wage can be prosecuted and forced to pay all back wages which are due.

It is notable that while the employers are forced to pay the minimum scale, the workers are not prohibited from going on strike for a higher scale. There is no element of compulsory arbitration in the Trade Board plan: the wage set by the board is a minimum wage and not a standard wage.

The objection to the minimum which is often heard in the United States is that it will throw out of work many of the least efficient and "marginal" workers who cannot earn even the minimum wage. This objection has been met in Great Britain by giving the Trade Boards power to issue permits allowing disabled or feeble workers to work for less than the minimum wage. For apprentices and young workers scales are often provided by the Boards.

UNIONISM AND THE TRADE BOARDS

The collective action of the workers in dealing with the employers through Trade Boards has given impetus to the development of trade unions, especially among women workers. The National Federation of Women Workers followed up every increase in the wages of the lowest paid women with effective union propaganda. The sweated workers have gradually learned something of the power of organization, and they have come to use the Trade Boards in many industries as battle grounds for the winning of standard living wages as well as the minimum wage. The Boards have encouraged the organization of both employers and workers.

The Trade Boards have also served to some slight extent as unofficial arbitration courts for the settlement of disputes.

In preventing strikes and lockouts by forcing recognition of the unions their success has been notable. There has been scarcely a single strike in industries supplied with Trade Boards since the Boards have been established. This is partially due to the fact that the unions in the sweated industries are not like the unions of miners, machinists and railwaymen; they are not so militant and aggressive. Their membership consists chiefly of women, many of whom are very young. It is due also to the fact that the Boards have been clothed with that definite authority which in a sense makes them superior to both employers and employees.

During the industrial depression of 1921 employers in many industries began a general attack upon the Trade Boards and the minimum wage standards. The workers were forced to give ground gradually. The future of the Trade Boards is likely to be stormy if the industrial depression continues. A government committee in 1922 reported in favor of abolishing many of the Trade Boards and the report was bitterly denounced by Labor Party leaders.

Chapter 9

SECURITY FOR THE WORKERS

No demand of the British workers is more important than their demand for security against the triple horrors of a worker's life, unemployment, sickness and old age. From the very beginning of the labor movement the demand for security rather than charity has been strong. The workers want to feel that a lifetime of hard labor will at least guarantee them against absolute destitution.

The suffering from unemployment reached its climax in Great Britain in the years 1921 and 1922 when the unemployed averaged 15 per cent of the working class. This was the highest percentage of unemployment in the history of Great Britain, the numbers running from 1,355,000 to 2,170,000. The industries which suffered most were shipbuilding, iron and steel manufacturing and building, but many other industries were affected. Armies of unemployed marched on London, rioting broke out in several industrial centers and the entire city council of Poplar, a section of London, went to prison as a protest against the inaction of the government in the crisis. The situation in 1923 grew steadily better.

At present there is not an adequate guarantee of security even when the workers are employed. The workers as a whole do not receive sufficiently high wages even in their best years to guarantee a decent and wholesome life. When sickness and unemployment come, their small savings rapidly disappear. They come to an old age of desperate

poverty, usually depending upon children who in their turn are struggling unsuccessfully to maintain a minimum standard of life.

After many investigations and exposures of the horrors of poverty, Great Britain has established three institutions which give a larger measure of security to the workers than they possessed before. These institutions are Unemployment Insurance, Old Age Pensions and Health Insurance.

THE GOVERNMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Since 1911 compulsory unemployment insurance has been applied to industry by the government. Until 1920 the policy was in an experimental stage and only a few great industries were included, the most important being the metal trades, building and shipbuilding. In 1920 the plan of unemployment insurance was extended to nearly all workers except domestic servants, farm laborers, permanent government employees and those receiving more than $1,200 for non-manual work. The details of the plan have been altered by several additional bills but the principles remain the same. Today about 12,000,000 of the workers of great Britain are insured against unemployment, including the casual dock workers. The unemployment insurance plan has survived the worst period of depression and there is no indication that it will be repealed in the future.

The scheme for administering unemployment insurance is this: the workers, the employers and the government each contribute money to an unemployment fund. The fund is administered by the government and whenever a worker is unemployed more than six days he can draw unemployment benefit from the government. An unemployed single man gets $3.60 a week; an unemployed single woman gets $2.88 a week. A man with a family dependent

upon him gets an allowance for each dependent. A man with a wife and three children for example, receives about $5.50 a week. Each single man pays 18 cents a week into the unemployment fund and each single woman 14 cents. Boys and girls between the ages of 16 and 18 pay about half as much and get half the standard benefits. The employers pay somewhat more for each worker than the worker pays himself. For each single man employee they pay 20 cents a week and for each single woman employee 16 cents. The government puts in about 14 cents for each man, and 11 cents for each woman. A few pennies a week are added to the contributions required in the case of workers with dependents.

It is easy to see that the British unemployed would starve if they had to support families on the unemployment dole. In actual practice thousands of the worst sufferers among the unemployed are relieved by their unions or by the local Poor Law Guardians who do the work which would be done in America by charity organizations and Community Chests. But even with this additional aid the lot of the British worker in times of unemployment is pitiable. His wages are so low that he cannot save up much for the rainy day. If the rainy day happens to stretch over many months, as it did in 1921 and 1922, it means undereating, insufficient clothing and perhaps eviction.

A great many safeguards are thrown around the unemployment insurance law in order to prevent men from getting the insurance who are not entitled to it. An unemployed man must report every day at the insurance office during the busiest hours of the day, often from ten to twelve in the morning, and accept work in his trade if it is offered under reasonable conditions. It is practically impossible to receive unemployment pay while working un-

less he acts in collusion with an employer who gives him time off to go to the unemployment office. The penalty for such violation of the law is severe.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND THE UNIONS

Unemployment insurance is largely the result of agitation by the unions, and now that it is applied to practically all union members the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Act in many districts is left to the unions. The unions often pay out the insurance to their own members, give out daily "Vacant Tickets" showing that their members have reported at the office, and find work for their own unemployed at the first opportunity. The Ministry of Labor supervises the administration of the insurance plan and refunds to the unions the money which they spend. This co-operation with the government has been economical, since the unions in these cases always provide their own members with some unemployment funds out of the union treasury, and the joint administration of the two funds does not involve much new machinery.

Through the influence of the unions the law has been so framed that workers who refuse to act as strikebreakers cannot be penalized for that refusal by the withdrawal of unemployment insurance. Moreover, workers cannot be refused unemployment insurance because they decline to work for less than the union scale of wages. The law provides that no worker can be refused unemployment benefits because of

"(a) Declining a situation rendered vacant in consequence of a stoppage of work or trade dispute.

(b) Declining employment in a district where last ordinarily employed at a rate of wages lower, or on conditions less favorable, than those which he habitually obtained in

his usual employment or would have obtained had he continued to be so employed.

(c) Declining employment in any other district at lower wages or less favorable conditions than those generally observed in that district by agreement between Associations of Employers and Employees, or if there is no such agreement, than those generally recognized in such district by good employers."

The workers do not receive any unemployment benefit during a strike or during the first six days of unemployment.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BY INDUSTRY

The Labor Party and the unions are not satisfied with the present system of unemployment insurance although they believe that under the existing circumstances the continuation of unemployment doles is necessary. A considerable section of the labor movement is in favor of developing a system of unemployment insurance by industry. The obvious objection to the present system is that it does nothing to *prevent* unemployment. Many leaders believe that if workers were insured by industry, the employers would have some motive to make work steady for their employees since their contributions to the unemployment fund would be decreased according to the decrease in unemployment. There would be a definite financial reward for the industry which could show steady work.

The National Joint Council of the Trades Union Congress and Labor Party has made a study of the possibilities of unemployment insurance by industry and has taken a poll of the unions to ascertain their wishes in this regard. The vote, taken in 1923, shows that the unions are quite evenly divided upon the question of the desirability of insurance by industry. The National Joint Council favors

a combination of the present scheme of insurance by the government with a limited amount of insurance by industry. It points out that a possible ultimate goal is a system under which the workers in each industry shall be supported by the industry itself without the necessity of contributions. It suggests the following plan as one upon which the entire labor movement may unite.

1. Industries which wish to continue the present system of insurance by contributions from the state, the employer and the worker should be permitted to do so.

2. Industries which have a small amount of unemployment may wish to "contract out of the state scheme," in the belief that the contributions of both workers and employers can be reduced thereby. This should be permitted if these industries pay benefits at least as high as the state benefits, if approved measures for the reduction of unemployment are adopted, and if the proper classifications of workers are made.

If such a general plan were adopted the industries which have a large amount of unemployment would probably stick to the state scheme, and the industries which have a small amount of unemployment would experiment with the quasi-independent scheme. The probable result would be that the state would be compelled to supply an extra amount of aid to the first class of industries and a reduced amount of aid to the second class of industries.

OLD AGE PENSIONS

One in every fifty-four persons in Great Britain in 1920 received old age pensions from the government. The pensions are practically all paid to the old men and women of the working class who have reached the age of seventy. Old men and women who have an annual income of about $150 or more cannot receive any old age pensions.

The amount of the old age pensions is very small, never exceeding $2.50 a week for one person. Practically all workers who have no income of their own and who have lived in Great Britain for a number of years are eligible to receive pensions without payment.

The unions are bitterly opposed to the refusal of the government to pay pensions to aged workers who by thrift and economy have been able to get incomes of more than $150 for their old age. They believe that this provision penalizes the workers who are just above the starvation minimum. In a resolution introduced at the Trades Union Congress in 1921 the Typographical Association moved:

"That this Congress urges resistance in the House of Commons to all Government legislation until the iniquitous clauses of the Old Age Pension Act are removed which deprive members of Trade Unions and others, who by their thrift have made provision for old age through their union or other society, from receiving the full benefit of the State old age pension."

The labor movement has also demanded the lowering of the age limit for old age pensions from 70 to 60 years.

SECURITY AGAINST SICKNESS

Nearly all manual workers in Great Britain must insure themselves against sickness under a plan supervised by the Ministry of Health. Sickness in any part of the population has been recognized as a danger to all the people.

The health insurance plan is similar to the unemployment insurance plan. Every male manual worker from 16 to 70 years old must contribute about 10 cents a week to cover the cost of doctors and medicine. The employer pays the same amount, deducting his own and the worker's share from the pay envelope each week. The government

puts in about 4 cents a week, and if the worker is sick he receives the services of a physician free of charge and about $3.50 a week for 26 weeks. A woman worker contributes less and receives about $2.90 a week, but she receives a special maternity benefit of $9.50.

The workers can choose their own doctor and can change doctors twice a year. The doctors are not compelled to take patients but the great majority of them are registered under this scheme. The saving to the workers and the government is immense, since the doctors are paid only a small sum for each one of their registered patients. They may take as many as three thousand patients.

The payment of sick benefits is administered almost entirely by trade unions, fraternal societies and insurance companies under the supervision of the Ministry of Health. It is estimated that fourteen million people in Great Britain are protected by this health insurance plan.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION

British workers have a legal right to recover compensation from their employers in case of "personal injury by accident arising out of and in the course of employment," and in the case of industrial disease contracted during employment. The law in regard to compensation is cumbersome and gives much opportunity for lawyers and employers to victimize the workers. If a worker is killed in the course of his employment and his wife is totally dependent upon him, she may receive not less than $740 and not more than $1,460, depending upon his weekly wages. A worker who is totally incapacitated is entitled to 87½ per cent of his average weekly earnings provided that the amount does not exceed $8.40 a week. J. H.

Thomas brought a Labor Party bill before the House of Commons in the summer of 1923 which proposed to greatly increase the scale of compensation for injured workers with a maximum of about $14.50. The government at the same time proposed to lower compensation.

Chapter 10

THE CO-OPERATIVES AND THE BUILDING GUILDS

THE GREATEST BRITISH INDUSTRY

Side by side with the militant organizations of producers in Great Britain there has grown up one of the strongest co-operative movements in the world. During the year 1922 over 1,320 co-operative retail stores sold more than eight hundred million dollars' worth of goods to British consumers. It is estimated that one-third of the families of Great Britain do business at the co-operative stores. There is now no British industry which approaches the co-operatives in importance and power. The co-operatives have a membership of more than 4,500,000.

The rise of the co-operatives is one of the romances of modern history. Beginning in small local associations of working men, of which the Rochdale Society founded in 1844 was the type, the movement spread rapidly among the workers. A little group of workers would buy a sack of potatoes together, then a sack of flour. When they saw that this was successful they would buy a few other articles, until gradually they became convinced that it was practical to buy things co-operatively. At no point in the development of the co-operatives have they been controlled by the upper classes. The great co-operative wholesale societies and the thousands of retail societies which now compose the movement are organizations which

grew up out of the working class and were made possible by the sacrifice and devotion of working class idealists.

THE CO-OPERATIVE IDEA

The co-operatives are inspired by the conviction of the British workers that the distribution and production of goods for private profit is inefficient and morally wrong. They are openly opposed to private capitalism and are working for its change. The control of the local societies is in the hands of all those who buy goods at the co-operative store. Practically any person is eligible to join the local co-operative by purchasing one share at $5, with an initial deposit of 25 cents. The members buy their goods at prices approximately the same as the prices of private retail stores and receive at the end of the quarter a dividend which is paid in proportion to the amount of goods purchased. Every member has one vote in the control of the Society no matter how much he buys.

This form of co-operative organization guarantees democratic control by the two safeguards:

1. The membership is always open and the par value of one share of stock, usually five dollars, is within the reach of every worker.

2. Every shareholder has one vote no matter how many shares he owns or how much money he spends.

The members are urged to leave their dividends with the co-operatives instead of drawing them out. The co-operatives pay five per cent interest on all such dividends left in their charge, but the member who leaves his capital in the co-operative treasury does not gain any control over the organization by this investment. No member is allowed to invest more than $1,000. The whole purpose of the organization is to give the control of economic life into the hands of the consumers rather than the investors.

THE GREAT CO-OPERATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

The retail co-operative societies soon found out that they could compete more successfully with the great capitalists and middlemen if they owned their own wholesale societies. The two great national Co-operative Wholesale Societies, the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, Ltd., and the English Co-operative Wholesale Society, Ltd., supply about half of the goods that are sold across the counters of the 1,320 retail societies. Manchester, the home of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, Ltd., is the center of the co-operative movement, with over one million co-operative members in a radius of 18 miles. Here at Manchester is a central Co-operative Bank, the financial department of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, with an annual movement of funds of more than two billion and a half dollars. Here also is a Co-operative Insurance Society with departments for life, accident, fire and burglary insurance.

The central propaganda and educational organization which includes all co-operators is the Co-operative Union. The Union represents the co-operative movement in much the same way that the Trades Union Congress represents the trade union movement; it holds annual conferences at which delegates from the local co-operatives attend and express their opinions concerning the general social and political problems of the movement. These national co-operative organizations are moving forward with tremenduous strides. Between 1913 and 1920 the increase in membership of the Co-operative Union averaged over 160,000 a year. Even during the depression the co-operatives' membership was maintained. The whole British movement is growing with the vigor of a crusade.

The successful development of these large-scale organi-

zations has proved to the workers that the private capitalist is not necessary for the success of great business enterprises. The co-operatives have beaten the capitalists at their own game.

FROM PAINT BRUSHES TO PEPPER

The co-operative movement is more than a distributive enterprise. It manufactures more goods than any private manufacturer in Great Britain: it owns more land than most private landlords in Great Britain: it hires more employees than any private employer in Great Britain.

A visitor who is entertained at the home of the Co-operative Wholesale Society in Manchester enters a building owned and insured co-operatively. It is painted by painters of the co-operatives who use brushes and paint manufactured in co-operative brush and paint factories. It is heated by coal from a co-operative mine. If the visitor is invited to dinner, he sits down on a chair manufactured in a co-operative furniture factory and picks up a napkin made in a co-operative textile mill. He is handed a menu card printed in a co-operative print shop by a waitress who is costumed from cap to shoes in apparel manufactured in co-operative clothing and shoe factories.

He eats a co-operative meal. The silverware is made in a co-operative cutlery works. The meat comes from cattle raised on the co-operative farms and killed in co-operative abattoirs. The bread is made in co-operative bakeries from flour ground in co-operative mills from wheat raised on co-operative farms. The butter and milk come from co-operative dairies. The pepper and tea come from co-operative plantations in India and Ceylon. The berries and cake are made in a co-operative preserve factory and a co-operative biscuit works. The after-dinner cigar is made in a co-operative tobacco factory in Manchester.

These productive enterprises of the Co-operative Movement have been almost as valuable to the consumer as the distributive enterprises. They have prevented price-fixing by monopolies. When Lord Leverhulme, who is the chief soap manufacturer in Great Britain, wanted to raise the price of soap, he endeavored to obtain the assistance of the Co-operative Wholesale Society to this end. The C. W. S., although it controls most of the soap production not controlled by Lord Leverhulme and could easily have created an effective price agreement, refused assistance because its directors felt that they existed for the benefit of the consumers. Likewise, the co-operative biscuit factories have prevented the raising of the prices of biscuits by a great combine of private manufacturers.

The co-operative factories have destroyed the illusion that private initiative is necessary to bring new invention and machine processes into effective use. These factories are producing goods of the highest quality by modern scientific methods at prices which allow competition with any privately manufactured product.

CO-OPERATIVES AND THEIR EMPLOYEES

The relation of the co-operatives to their employees is a sore point with many co-operators. Although the societies are controlled by wage workers who have always stood together against the employers, these same wage workers have found that when they embarked as co-operative officers upon great business enterprises in competition with private capitalists they had to assume the capitalist point of view in keeping wages at the competitive level. If they raised wages above the level of the wages in competing industries they found themselves unable to lower prices for the consumer.

The co-operatives have met this issue by guaranteeing to

their workers the union scale of wages prevailing in private industries. In many instances they have paid much more than this union scale. During the war the co-operatives paid to every service man throughout his term of service the difference between his wages and the government pay. If he was crippled in service the co-operative supports him for life.

In spite of these special grants to co-operative employees there have been a number of strikes by union workers employed by various branches of the movement. A special union of co-operative employees was created in opposition to the principles accepted by the Trades Union Congress and in many instances it demanded wages which the competitors of the co-operatives were not compelled to pay. Most of the strikes against the co-operatives were conducted by this organization. The Trades Union Congress went on record as opposed to the development of any union which is simply a defensive alliance against any one employer, because it obviously puts such an employer under special penalties when the union is able to force better conditions in his plant while the concerns of his competitors are left untouched.

The relations between co-operatives and their employees are being steadily improved by the formation of Joint Committees of Trade Unionists and co-operators with a National Advisory Council representing the Trades Union Congress and the Co-operative Union. Many disputes have been settled through these committees acting as arbitration boards. A big strike in the summer of 1923 was settled by the Joint Committee. The old Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees has become a part of a large union, so that its attack is not directed solely against the co-operatives. As the co-operative leaders become more experienced in handling employment problems it is likely that

much of the friction between the workers and the co-operatives will disappear.

But aside from the minor disputes concerning the wages of the unskilled, there is the more serious problem of workers' control in the co-operatives. If the miners and railroad workers are entitled to workers' control on the railroads and in the mines, what shall we say of the co-operative employees? That question has not been answered by the co-operative leaders. There is no participation in management by co-operative employees. Some of the managers of co-operative enterprises are arbitrary and unsympathetic with their employees. The control of the large co-operatives tends to pass into the hands of a hierarchy of efficient managers who, because they are employed and controlled by the consumers, are tempted to ignore the demand for more democratic control by their employees.

Many critics of the co-operative movement believe that the problem will be ultimately solved by the development of the co-operatives into productive and distributive guilds conducted by the workers without profit, for the benefit of the consumers. Some believe that a joint system of workers' and consumers' control may be worked out. In any case the problem offers no insuperable obstacles to a Labor Government controlled as it would be by both the unions and the co-operators, who in the last analysis are the same people.

CO-OPERATORS IN POLITICS

The co-operatives have been driven into politics by the stupidity of the older political parties. The Coalition Government sought to tax co-operative dividends as private profits, and against this policy the whole co-operative movement rose in arms. During the war, when the gov-

ernment applied the Excess Profits Tax law to the co-operatives, they promptly responded by having no excess profits; they reduced the selling prices enough to avoid any payments to the government of excess dividends. The co-operative leaders maintain that co-operative dividends are not "profit" since they are not the returns on invested capital: co-operative dividends are really reductions in the price of commodities returned to consumers in a lump sum. It is more convenient and economical to return them in that way than to cut prices.

The government's hostility to the co-operatives has led the members to start a political party of their own called the Co-operative Party. As an independent force in politics it is not powerful, since almost all its aims are included in the program of the Labor Party. It has elected 4 members to Parliament who work in harmony with the labor members. It has formed working alliances with the Labor Party in many districts, and it may be absorbed into the Labor Party in the near future.

A strong prejudice against affiliation with the Labor Party has existed for many years in the co-operative movement, but that prejudice is being overcome by leaders who are active in both movements. Slowly the co-operators are realizing that the two organizations are aiming at the same co-operative society. At the conventions of the Co-operative Union in recent years the question of affiliation to the Labor Party has been brought up at each session. At first the proposal of affiliation was defeated by a large majority. But gradually the chorus of "Noes" has dwindled and the chorus of "Ayes" has become more lusty. At the 1921 session the debate ended with a vote of 1,686 against affiliation to the Labor Party and 1,682 for such affiliation. Since then the friends of the Labor Party have been con-

tent to maintain an effective working alliance between the Co-operative and Labor Parties.

HOW THE UNIONS AND THE CO-OPERATIVES HELP EACH OTHER

The best proof of the fact that the co-operatives are a part of the labor movements is found in the support which the co-operatives have given the unions during the most critical strikes of recent years. Without the credit of the co-operative stores many a miner's family would have starved during the thirteen weeks' coal strike of 1921. The stores not only extended credit to the miners individually, but the Co-operative Bank came to the rescue of the Miners' Federation with money and credit for organization work. In addition to loans the co-operatives have given freely for strike benefit in the hour of need.

In the railway strike of 1919 the Co-operative Bank advanced over $1,450,000 to the National Union of Railwaymen. In this nine-day strike elaborate preparations were made to feed the workers' families through the co-operative factories, farm and transport service in case the strike continued to prevent the shipment of food on the railways. In the event of the spread of this strike the transport workers agreed not to strike in co-operative industries.

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION

The money which in a private commercial concern would be spent on advertising is spent by the co-operative movement on education. Most local co-operatives spend two and a half per cent of their dividends on educational activity. Part of this money is spent in class work. Hundreds of co-operative classes are scattered over Great Britain, meeting once a week from October to May. They study the economics of co-operation under the direction

of an expert, often a professional co-operative lecturer, who is employed exclusively in educational work. A wide range of subjects for study is included: the classes are offered courses in Sociology, Banking, Ethics, the Art of Teaching, Co-operative Management, Industrial History and Salesmanship. These weekly classes are followed by summer schools for more intensive study. In the summer of 1921 five summer schools for adults and three for junior students were held. These summer schools last from two to four weeks and every student is expected to attend at least one week. The educational features are liberally mixed with recreation, to give the workers the vacation which they need.

The work among the younger co-operators is especially significant. The junior summer schools are designed for children from twelve to fourteen. The children are taught the value of co-operation among the animals and throughout all nature. They are given the co-operative message with their geography, history, arithmetic and reading. When they have passed through the junior stage they are introduced to the "Comrades Movement," an educational organization for co-operators above the age of fourteen which is drawing growing boys away from the Boy Scout movement. In the Comrades Movement the work of classes is often continued.

The dream of the educational co-operators for many years has now been realized in the establishment of a Co-operative College in Manchester. In this college courses are given in all the subjects listed for the general co-operative classes, and managers of co-operatives are given special technical training with a manager's certificate at the completion of their course. Courses are open to any co-operator who is seventeen years of age or over, and the work is so arranged that a student may take long or short

terms of full-time study or night classes only. For those who cannot come to Manchester, correspondence courses have been arranged.

Aside from educational work in classes the co-operative movement is carrying on a tremendous amount of propaganda and education through magazines, newspapers, books and pamphlets. Perhaps no part of the labor movement is so prolific in literature. Whatever may be the faults of the co-operative movement there can be no question that it is doing heroic service in developing among the average workers "the co-operative mind."

THE BUILDING GUILDS

One of the most interesting experiments of recent years in industry has been attempted by the British building workers in the establishment of guilds or self-governing producers' organizations to build houses. The first building guild was established in Manchester in January, 1920, and the movement soon spread until over one hundred local guild committees were formed. The organizations of these guilds is simple. The guilds are part of the trade unions and are completely controlled by union members. When the building workers in a certain city want to form a guild, they choose one member from each of the building unions to form a building guild committee. This committee *is* the guild. It calls for volunteers who are willing to work with the guild and when the volunteers have been secured, it searches for contracts. When the contracts have been signed, it chooses the workers for the job in the order in which they volunteered, elects a foreman for each department, buys the materials and starts to work.

The workers in the guild agree to receive the union scale of wages and no more. They also agree not to take a cent of profit for themselves. This principle which the

guilds have adhered to strictly distinguishes the guild movement from the co-operatives and private industry. All profits above the estimated costs and overhead is returned to the consumer who buys the house.

The principles of the guilds are set forth by the original branch in Manchester:

"1. The Guild demands the abolition of the existing wage contract. By this wage contract . . . not only is labor debarred from any shares or interest in the product or any control of the industry which it maintains by its activities, it is positively the last charge upon the industry when it should be the first. Thus when trade depressions come . . . labor is promptly thrown upon the scrap-heap of unemployment. The Guild therefore declares (and makes the necessary practical arrangements) that labor must be the first charge upon the industry. Since dividends take priority over labor, the Guild declines to issue any shares or stock of any description. It gives effect at the same time to the principle of the industrial maintenance of the unemployed.

"2. The Guild declares (and acts upon its own belief) that industry must be conducted not with accumulated capital mostly stolen from labor, but upon the group credit in industrial organization, . . . credit which in its turn depends upon the willingness and capacity of the workers to carry on.

"3. The Guild further declares that democratic principles are at least equally desirable in industry as in politics. It therefore provides the machinery to compass that end. Self-government is the next step. The building trades unions have now secured the monopoly of their labor; they are 'blackleg proof.' They must move forward or go back. In the nature of the case, they cannot remain stationary. Their only alternatives are to place themselves at the mercy of the local authorities by means of direct employment, or to become a National Guild with all its powers, responsibilities, and prerogatives.

"4. Yet again, the Guild declares that it has a definite duty to the community and to its fellow-workers in other industries. This duty is best accomplished, not by abrogating the rights of self-government with what that properly involves, but by returning to the community all and any surplus over the cost of production. It is for this reason that it has steadily refused to build houses at a profit. In every case it has tendered on the basis of cost. Not commercial cost, which takes no account of wet time or unemployment or sickness, which is callously calculated merely upon the commodity valuation of labor at so much per hour plus the cost of raw materials, but upon the social cost of labor, which includes these factors and vicissitudes. Beyond that, labor has no claim; the Guild makes no claim. Even the plant is vested in trustees, who must see that it is used for public and not for selfish purposes.

"5. Finally, the Guild declares that true craftsmanship must be revived. There is no reason, save only the profiteering greed of modern capitalism, why building Guildsmen should not equal or surpass the triumphs of the mediæval period. But to attain this the National Building Guild must control not only its mature by its immature labor. All technical instruction and training must come under the Guild's jurisdiction."

THE GUILD IN ACTION

With these principles as a basis of action the building guilds erected houses valued at more than $1,450,000 in the first year and a half of their existence. They were able to operate with small amounts of capital at first since most of their orders were from city governments which were willing to pay week by week for the work as it developed. The Co-operative Bank advanced considerable money to the guilds. Until the industrial depression came, the guilds were eminently successful, building houses in

many cases far cheaper than the estimate and underbidding private contractors. On the whole the workers' control of foremen resulted in efficiency and in the best of fraternal spirit. The foremen were not chosen by the men directly under them but by the local guild representing all the building trade workers in the area.

With the coming of the financial depression several causes operated to check the development of the building guilds. The local governments which had given the guilds over 90 per cent of their business were forced to discontinue their building projects. The local guilds had formed a National Building Guild which signed contracts and acted as fiscal agent for the local guilds. This National Guild had expanded too rapidly into new territory and had incurred heavy obligations. With the collapse of business in 1922 the National Building Guild was forced into bankruptcy. Many local guilds continue in existence and some appear to have a bright future. With the exception of a few local guilds in which members "loafed on the job" the guilds were able to demonstrate that production without profit is possible on an efficient basis in the building industry. The temporary slump of the movement in 1922–23 was paralleled by scores of bankruptcies of private employers who faced similar difficulties in regard to credit. With the restoration of more normal industrial conditions in Great Britain there is good reason to believe that the building guilds can continue their earlier successes.

Chapter 11

LEADERSHIP

THE RISE OF THE ORGANIZER

The process by which a British labor leader rises from the ranks is not unlike the process by which an American worker rises to power. The worker who is destined to become a leader is usually a man of exceptional energy or intelligence, a "good mixer" and a man of some courage. If he does not have too many children to support and if his wages are higher than the average his attitude toward his employer becomes independent. "He is not afraid of the boss." When some grievance comes up in the shop he talks to the employer about it in company with an informal committee. At the meeting of the local union he speaks boldly and militantly, always denouncing the employer. When there is a vacancy in the office of union secretary he is nominated and elected to that office. He learns the many difficult details of handling union membership lists and accounts. He is always hounding the members to pay their dues and assessments. He becomes well known to all the members of his branch and occasionally may be called upon to make some remarks at the meetings of other branches in his trade. As his interest increases, he reads labor pamphlets and takes an active part in the campaign of the Labor Party. Perhaps he attends a tutorial class of the W. E. A.

Meanwhile his position in the shop has become more difficult and his employer regards him as an agitator. If

a depression comes he is likely to be victimized first, not directly but on some plausible pretext that his services are no longer needed. If he is a weak man or if he has a large family dependent upon him, he may drop out of union activity and become friendly to the employer in order to gain employment again. He may become a bitter critic of the union in order to justify his own desertion. Many foremen in British and American industry come from this class of able malcontents who could not "stand the gaff" as union leaders.

If the worker is a man of exceptional courage or if he has a measure of economic independence he continues his union activity and becomes the right-hand man of the local union organizer. In time of strike he learns to act as a local organizer himself and when the old organizers begin to drop out he is chosen as a business agent and organizer for his district. He gladly takes the new position in spite of its precariousness because he finds it more desirable than work in the shop and it pays a slightly higher wage.

As a business agent he finds that he cannot go around denouncing the employers all the time: he must bargain with these employers every day and he dare not criticize them too severely in meetings because his words are carried back to them. He gradually learns many details of his trade that he had never heard of before. After bitter experience he learns not to trust in the promises of many employers. His speeches in the union meetings are never militant except in time of strike when he engages in fiery denunciations. He learns that the union members do not appreciate his skill in bargaining and that they often listen to the words of a bitter agitator who knows nothing about the difficulties of bargaining with the employers.

If he is exceptionally successful he may rise to a position as a national executive, but his chances for this pro-

motion are exceedingly slight. His term of service is likely to be longer in the British labor movement than the term of service of American organizers because the British unions are more firmly established. His position in the community is somewhat higher than the position of an American organizer because unions are more universally recognized. He does not have to face gunmen and injunctions as often as an American organizer because the law in England is more fair to labor leaders. As he becomes older he may find that the work is too difficult for him and he must go back to the shop, if a place can be found, or start some small business of his own. His pay is much lower than that of an American organizer and his old age may be spent in utter poverty.

The character of British leadership in the unions has changed as the movement has developed. The gang leader of a hundred years ago was usually supplemented by some idealistic leader of the middle class in the conduct of a strike. Today unions are led by responsible executives of great administrative ability who compare favorably with the industrial leaders of any nation. They do not need to turn to the middle class for counsel in the conduct of industrial disputes: they are quite self-sufficient except in statistical matters which are handled by the union's research experts.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

In the political field the national industrial leaders also play a leading part. Most of the leaders of the Labor Party are union leaders and the speeches made at the Trades Union Congress are often practically the same speeches made by the same men who dominate the Labor Party conferences. The chief difference in leadership is that the intellectuals play a much larger part in the Labor

Party. Writers, professors, economic experts and university graduates of many types are strong in local Labor Parties and in the labor delegation in Parliament.

The reason for this difference is obvious. The problems of politics are often far removed from the workshop in which the union leader has had his training, but they are quite familiar to the trained student of economics and politics from the university. The moment that labor entered politics, the union leaders found that they could not cope single handed with the strategy of the conservative political experts. So they turned to those intellectuals who had, indeed, forced them into politics, to the socialists and reformers who shared their aims and had won their confidence.

WHO'S WHO IN BRITISH LABOR

A few men in the British labor world have gained international reputation. The two great figures in labor politics are Ramsay MacDonald and Arthur Henderson, with J. R. Clynes at present slightly in the background. MacDonald is leader of His Majesty's Opposition in the House of Commons and the logical choice for prime minister if the Labor Party comes into power while he is its leader. He is a rugged Scotchman, a socialist pioneer, an intellectual and a powerful speaker. He was a pacifist during the war, a fact which makes his present ascendency in the Labor Party all the more remarkable. He was parliamentary leader of the Labor Party before the war but lost his seat in the Commons for a time because of his pacifist attitude. Arthur Henderson, who has served as the secretary of the Labor Party for many years and who is the Chief Whip in Parliament, started life as an iron moulder. He is the chief executive of the party in business affairs and he wrote the famous 1918 constitution of the party,

"Labor and the New Social Order." Unlike MacDonald, he supported the war and served on the war cabinet.

J. R. Clynes, who preceded MacDonald as leader of the parliamentary Labor Party, is one of the leading figures in the union world as well. He has served as president of the National Union of General Workers and has held a seat in Parliament for 17 years. He succeeded Lord Rhondda as Food Minister during the war and established a great reputation as an administrator.

Among industrial leaders the most influential are Frank Hodges, secretary of the Miners' Federation, J. H. Thomas, secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, Arthur Pugh, secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Federation, George Hicks, president of the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives, and R. B. Walker, secretary of the National Union of Agricultural Workers. Thomas and Hodges were the central figures in the old Triple Alliance: both may be classed among the more conservative leaders today. Hodges was a leader of the strike of students in Ruskin College and helped to found the Labor College in London, since when he has grown steadily more conservative. Thomas is one of the labor leaders of Parliament. Hodges and Thomas are both still young and can be counted upon to remain in positions of great power for several years.

Among women leaders the most prominent are Margaret Bondfield of the National Union of General Workers, Madeline Symons, A. Susan Lawrence, and Marion Philips. Margaret Bondfield was the first woman to reach a high position in the Trades Union Congress. Dr. Marion Philips is the leading woman organizer for the Labor Party.

Robert Smillie stands in his own class. He is probably the most popular figure in the British labor movement and his election to Parliament in the summer of 1923 on a

straight socialist platform was a fitting climax to a lifetime of service for labor. For many years he was president of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain but retired because of ill health. His character and opinions can well be compared to the character and opinions of Eugene Debs.

The General Election of 1922 brought into Parliament many intellectual leaders who have been connected with the Labor Party for years. Foremost among these were Philip Snowden, Sidney Webb and Arthur Greenwood. Snowden, who has served with Ramsay MacDonald as leader of the Independent Labor Party, returned to Parliament after a four years' absence. Sidney Webb, who had never before held a Parliamentary seat, is generally regarded as the greatest socialist writer and thinker in Great Britain. His distinguished wife, Beatrice Webb, should be bracketed in the description. Arthur Greenwood, who was formerly a university teacher, has quietly done a tremendous service to the labor movement as head of the Research Department of the Labor Party and Trades Union Congress.

Outside of Parliament there are many intellectual leaders whose influence has been great. G. D. H. Cole has headed the Guild socialist movement and stands next to Sidney Webb as the most distinguished socialist writer. R. H. Tawney of Oxford has served as an educational leader and has made important studies of sweated industries. J. J. Mallon has made Toynbee Hall in East London, the first social settlement in the world, into a valuable labor center in addition to serving as leader of labor on the Trade Boards. William Temple, the Lord Bishop of Manchester, is president of the Workers' Educational Association.

Chapter 12

WORKERS' EDUCATION

THE NEED OF EDUCATION

As organized labor has become more important in the state its leaders have felt the need of education not only for themselves but for the members with whom they work. The leader of a modern trade union must be a man who has some knowledge of economic problems, who uses English fluently and correctly, and who knows the essentials of business administration. He is constantly speaking in public meetings, he is often placed in charge of a whole group of office workers in administering the government's unemployment insurance, most important of all he must be responsible for the happiness of thousands of workers and their families at times when his ignorance of economic facts may cost them everything they have.

If the leaders have need of education to fit them for leadership, the need is all the more marked among the rank and file of the workers. The whole tendency of the machine process is to grind men down, to obliterate everything of originality and imagination. Unless the miner, for example, has some mental interest outside of his daily work he soon becomes like the ancient horses who drag the coal wagons through the dark tunnels of the mines, an animal sweating in the dark.

The need of workers' education is particularly apparent in England because nearly all the children of the working class leave school at fourteen when they have gained only

the most fragmentary conception of education. Only five per cent of the children in the public elementary schools ever enter a high school, and of these many thousands from working class families are forced to drop out and go to work. The British tradition has been against any children of the workers going far in school unless they were unusually brilliant. The result has been that higher education has been reserved for the upper classes, and the traditions of "the gentlemen" still cling to it.

WHAT WORKERS' EDUCATION IS

Workers' education as it has developed in Great Britain is different from other education in two respects. The workers through their unions control partially or completely the classes and the teachers, and the students have the controlling voice in choosing their subject and method of study. The wide range of the subjects taught in workers' classes may be seen from a list compiled by the Trade Union Education Enquiry Committee which made an investigation of the field in 1921.

Trade Union History and Problems	Economic Theory
Co-operative History and Problems	Political Theory
Industrial History	International Problems
Political History	Psychology
History of Social Movements	Biology
Problems of Reconstruction	Social Psychology
Industrial Administration	Sociology
Local Government	Philosophy
	Literature
	Music
	Art

The teachers of workers' classes assume that the interest of the workers is the interest of mature minds. The classes

are conducted on the university plan rather than the elementary school plan. There are lectures on difficult and profound problems, usually lasting one hour, then the lecture is followed by a question and discussion period of an hour in which the students themselves take the lead and the teacher does as little talking as possible. Industrial History, Trade Union Problems and Economics are the most popular subjects of study. The workers come to the classes with a desire for more vital knowledge about the labor movement and its place in society.

THE WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

The leading organizations for workers' education are
The Workers' Educational Association
The Labor Colleges
Ruskin College.

The largest and most important of these organizations is the Workers' Educational Association, commonly known as the W. E. A. which was founded in 1903. In 1922 there were more than 23,000 students attending classes under the auspices of the W. E. A.

The organization of the W. E. A. is not unlike the organization of the Labor Party: it is a federation of unions, co-operatives and other working-class bodies which are affiliated to the central body in groups, each organization paying a fee of at least $25 for each national organization. The Trades Union Congress, the General Federation of Trade Unions and the Co-operative Union are all affiliated members of the W. E. A. There were 2,798 such affiliated societies in 1922 and their number was growing steadily. The organization is controlled by a Central Council composed of representatives of the affiliated bodies.

The three leading questions which arose in the campaign for workers' education were:

How shall we get the workers interested in education?

Who will teach the workers?

How can we raise the money to pay for the work?

The W. E. A. has answered the first of these questions by building up branch and district organizations of the workers to stimulate interest in education by continuous educational propaganda. There were 389 branch organizations in 1923 and many district secretaries who spent their entire time in organizing the educational work. The W. E. A. leaders have realized that the organizing of educational work is quite different from actual teaching, so they have not generally imposed upon the teachers the burden of organizing the educational work. The organizing is done by able trade unionists most of whom have come through the advanced classes.

The teachers are drawn for the most part from the universities and especially from the younger generation of university teachers. Wherever possible they are men who have a definite interest in the labor movement and in many cases they are national experts on labor problems. Very few of the teachers spend their entire time in teaching workers' classes although the W. E. A. is anxious to get the services of the best workers' teachers for four or five nights a week. Usually the teacher has a regular profession to which he adds the teaching of a workers' class one or two nights a week and receives a modest addition to his regular salary. He must be quick to adapt himself to the interests of the class, for if he fails in adaptation, he may find himself without a class.

THE TUTORIAL CLASSES

The greatest work of the W. E. A. has been done through its tutorial classes which are financed by government grants and contributions from the universities and local educa-

tional authorities. The students themselves pay almost nothing toward the support of the classes.

The regular tutorial classes are devoted to courses in some chosen subject which run for three years and usually cover the general field of industrial history and problems. They meet once a week for two hours, often in a union hall, but sometimes in a public building, and spend the time in lectures and discussion. Nominally they are university tutorial classes, since the university authorities appoint the supervising committee, but in actual practice at least half of these committees are appointed by the W. E. A. from among the workers, and the control of the class rests in the hands of the students and workers. Nearly all the British universities have joint committees for tutorial class work.

Not all the workers who are interested in education can bind themselves to attend a class for three years. For these workers the W. E. A. has developed One-Year Classes in almost all the subjects which are covered in the three-year courses. There were 635 such One-Year Classes in 1922, attended by 16,300 students. Both the One-Year and Three-Year Classes usually start with approximately thirty students and maintain a good attendance record.

THE SUMMER SCHOOLS

The idea of summer schools for workers is rapidly gaining favor in the labor movement. In the summer school study and play can be combined for an ideal vacation, especially if the workers can be given scholarships covering their expenses. Eight summer schools were held by the W. E. A. in 1922 at Oxford, Cambridge, Canterbury, London, Repton, Bonskeid, Bangor and Bristol. The workers who attended these schools spent one or two weeks listening to lectures, discussing the lectures among themselves,

and having a good time. At Oxford, for example, the morning of every day was given over to a lecture by a university tutor, followed by an hour of discussion, and the afternoon was partly taken up with personal conferences with tutors. The summer schools have sent back into the unions workers who were mentally refreshed and physically rested.

RUSKIN COLLEGE

Ruskin College, the famous working class college, is affiliated to the W. E. A. Founded in 1899 by three Americans, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Vrooman and Dr. Charles Beard, it was for years the representative institution of British working class education, but a strike of students in 1909 against the policy of its directors did much to discredit the college among workers. The strike resulted in the migration of a large part of the student body to London where the Labor College was founded. With the dying down of bitterness caused by the strike, Ruskin College has come back into some of its former influence, and a number of full-time residential students are sent there each year on scholarships from the unions. Although the college is located at Oxford it is not a part of the university and is not controlled by the university. Its official prospectus declares:

"Ruskin College is the College of the Labor Movement. Any Trade Union, Trades and Labor Council, Co-operative Society, or other working class organization, which at its own expense maintains a student or students at the College, is entitled to have one representative on the Governing Council, elected annually from its own members."

Ruskin College, like all the other working class educational institutions, does not require a definite amount of schooling before entrance and it does not aim to prepare the workers for any particular type of higher education.

It accommodates itself to the needs of workers who can afford only a short period of study by giving one, two and three month courses and by maintaining a correspondence department for workers who cannot attend the college classes. Its regular course lasts for two years and consists of classes in Industrial History, Economics, Co-operation, Trade Unionism, Public Speaking, Socialism, etc. It does not have many resident students but its influence has been considerable, since more than seven hundred workers have passed through at least part of its courses.

THE LEFT WING EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENT

There has grown up in recent years a vigorous Left Wing Educational Movement devoted to the spread of Marxian socialism and deriving at least part of its inspiration from Russian communism. The movement is centered in the Labor College at London which was founded by the students of Ruskin College after their historic strike. The ideas of the movement are diffused throughout Great Britain by a very militant organization of young "reds," the Plebs League, which conducts classes, publishes a magazine and inspires its members to make themselves heard on every possible occasion. Although the students of the Labor College are not large in number the College in co-operation with Plebs League has extended its classes over a large part of Great Britain and thousands of workers are in attendance. The college itself is supported by the South Wales Miners' Federation and the National Union of Railwaymen.

The Left Wing Educational Movement has declared itself in favor of certain policies which make it distinct from the main educational movement as represented in the W. E. A.:

1. The workers should be taught definite revolutionary

economics, chiefly the economics of Karl Marx. The teachers should be thoroughly committed to Marxian doctrine.

2. Workers' education should not be controlled by or in any way associated with the government, the universities or any institution representing the upper classes.

3. The funds which support workers' education should come from the workers themselves.

The aims of the Labor College are set forth in a manifesto published at the time of its founding:

"Labor must achieve its own liberty. Liberty cannot be superimposed from above, it cannot be presented as a gift from an economically superior class. How many movements have paid the penalty for allowing those whose interests lay outside those movements to come in and lead them astray? Let history answer. The mission of the workers cannot be committed for achievement to those above them in economic position: it must be self-accomplished. From every point of view, in every part of the field, industrial, political or educational, the workers must act independently. Class interests and class education are inseparable. An educational institution which either consciously or unconsciously neglects to recognize this incontrovertible fact stands in the way of progress and deceives those who believe in it. Working class education is necessarily partisan. It is no more impartial than working class politics. It can be no less independently controlled than a Trade Union."

The Labor College because of the militancy of its teaching has had a considerable influence, an influence which is described by its friends as awakening and by its enemies as embittering. It sends its students back to the mines and mills charged with the responsibility of organizing and conducting classes of their own. It emphasizes those prob-

lems which are the storm center of labor thought at the present time. It wages uncompromising warfare upon the W. E. A.

THE UNFINISHED TASK

It must not be supposed that the workers' educational movement has wrought any great change in the British labor world as yet. Thirty thousand-odd workers are attending classes and lectures but millions of others are taking no part in educational activity. From the thirty thousand, however, many of the leaders will undoubtedly come and these leaders will give impetus to the whole movement.

The next step in the development of the workers' educational movement is the establishment of a closer connection between the unions and the educational bodies and the consolidation of the educational bodies now in existence. The Trades Union Congress has gone on record in favor of consolidation and the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation as well as other unions have developed special educational committees. But the left wing educational forces have not shown any disposition to make common cause with the Workers' Educational Association.

Chapter 13

LABOR AND THE FARMERS

THE THREE CLASSES OF FARMERS

The land problem in Great Britain is quite different from that in the United States because of the ownership of much of the land by great landlords who have often inherited it from ancestors who did some service for an ancient king. Comparatively few farmers do the manual work on their own land. The three classes which control the farm life of Great Britain are:

The Land Owners
The Tenant Farmers
The Farm Laborers.

In most areas, these three classes are quite distinct although the number of landowning farmers is increasing. The landlords are often noblemen who spend their time in the cities with occasional trips to a country home. They have no particular interest in the cultivation of the soil and tend to act simply as receivers of rent. The farmers rent their holdings from these great landlords or own their own small holdings and hire farm workers to help them. The farm worker is not as migratory a person as he is in the United States: often he is born in a farm cottage and stays there throughout his days or until the conditions become so intolerable that he is forced to leave.

The land is the last great stronghold of the old ruling class. Half of it is owned by 2,500 owners. Nearly three million acres are reserved exclusively for deer forests where

the landed gentry and their friends frolic away their conspicuous leisure. No contrast in British life is more startling than the contrast between the purely parasitic landowning class and the sweated farm laborers respectfully handing over to the owners a large part of the product of their toil. Fortunately for the future of Great Britain the farm workers are playing their part with decreasing deference.

Although there are many types of land holdings, the typical British farm is an area of about 200 acres, owned by an absentee landlord, rented by a capitalist farmer and worked by the farmer and by agricultural workers.

THE FAILURE OF ABSENTEE LANDLORDISM

It is natural that a system which puts the ultimate control of the land in the hands of men who do not cultivate it is likely to be inefficient. Absentee landlordism has virtually brought ruin to many large areas of British land. To begin with, the landowners have not only lacked interest in the land but they have not provided themselves with technical knowledge. They have owned the land not primarily for cultivation and sometimes not primarily for private profit but for the social distinction which land ownership gives. In this respect the British mind is not unlike the mind of many continental nationalities: land owning has for so many centuries been the prerogative of the nobility that the possession of large estates in itself gives social prestige and political power. If a capitalist can own a large estate, a great stretch of land for hunting, and a magnificent country home, of what importance to him is it that the land is undercultivated and wrongly cultivated?

So efficiency has not become a point of honor in the farming industry as it is with many manufacturers. The

owners in many cases do not provide the capital and equipment necessary to make progress in cultivation: they do not display initiative in making their land more productive and in adopting the latest improvements. In his book on "Agriculture After the War," Sir Daniel Hall, Chief Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture, says: "The one thing the landowning class in this country have lacked has been technical knowledge: they have not treated landowning as a career nor qualified themselves to give a lead to their tenants. Nor have their agents brought a more enlightened outlook to their profession. The root of the evil lies in the owners' want of technical knowledge of the land."

THE SWEATING OF FARM WORKERS

The lot of the laborers who work for the tenant farmers has been a deplorable one. An industry which is so badly managed that neither the landowners nor the farmers receive large returns cannot afford to pay its laborers high wages. The position of the workers at the bottom of the ladder has left them open to all the abuses of the inefficient system. They have practically no chance of advancement from their position as hired men. When the profits of the farmer go down, their wages are cut even if they have been receiving just enough for maintenance. Until the outbreak of the war they were not paid more than $4.10 a week—that was the average wage in 1914. Out of this sum they had to pay rent and supply food and clothing for the family. Their hours of labor up to 1919 were from sixty to seventy-eight a week.

One of the worst abuses of farm life is the "tied cottage system." The shortage of houses in the country has been acute, and nearly all the farm workers live in houses owned by the farmers or landlords. If it were not for the strenu-

ous work of such unions as the National Union of Agricultural Workers the laborers would have no protection against eviction by the landlord or farmer who could not only discharge them if they showed signs of discontent but could put them, with their families, out of their homes. The effect of this close surveillance of the laborer has been to deprive him of courage and initiative, to destroy his independence. Perhaps he lives in a house that is more crowded than many houses in East London and not so well repaired. In addition to all these disadvantages the opportunities for education and recreation are far less than those to be found in the cities.

It is little wonder, then, that the same movement of the most vigorous and able young men from the country to the city which is noticeable in the United States is evident in Great Britain. The farms are being drained of their best blood. The number of people who work on farms is decreasing while the population is increasing. It is estimated that about seven-eighths of the people live in towns and cities: there were not half as many people on the farms in proportion to population in 1911 as there were in 1851.

WHAT THE UNIONS HAVE DONE

By organizing the farm workers the unions have brought about "the greatest and most rapid improvement in working conditions in the whole history of British Labor." Part of the improvement in conditions has been due to the Agricultural Wages Board set up by the government during the war and a part has been due to the rise of trade unions which brought about a number of laborers' strikes before the war and forced the hand of both the government and the owners.

The formation of unions among the farm workers has

been one of the most difficult tasks of the British labor movement. The farm worker is constantly watched by his employer who generally knows what he is doing day and night. He has little opportunity to come together with his fellow-workers in mass movements of any kind, so he does not know the meaning of co-operation in the same sense that the miner knows it. If he is seen speaking to a union organizer, the employer soon discovers it and he may be singled out for discharge or discrimination.

One of the first movements to establish unions for the sweated farm workers was crushed by the law under an ancient statute which forbids a citizen to administer an oath of secrecy. In 1834 six union leaders who had forgotten this statute and administered an oath of secrecy were arrested and exiled from England for seven years. The first effort to establish farm workers' unions on a national scale took place in the seventies under the leadership of a militant local preacher of the Methodist Church, Joseph Arch. Arch built up a union of 90,000 workers in a few years and asked for a wage of $2.80 a week. The farmers became alarmed, declared a national lockout against the organized workers and after one of the most bitter industrial struggles in British history completely crushed the union. But the spirit of the farm workers revived with the rising of a new generation and in the days after the World War a tremendous organizing campaign swept over the country bringing into the unions 350,000 members in four years. Almost half of the farm workers were organized in the National Union of Agricultural Workers, the Scottish Farm Servants' Union, The Workers' Union and in other general labor unions.

The farm workers through the assistance of the Agricultural Wages Board and their unions won shorter hours everywhere. The sixty and seventy-hour week were re-

placed by the forty-eight-hour week in winter and fifty-hour week in summer. The "winter" stretched out over eight months. In Scotland the working week, including attendance on animals, averaged about fifty-six hours a week. The farm workers also won in most places the Saturday half holiday with freedom from regular work on Sunday.

The benefits of union organization in increasing wages are seen in the wage scales from 1914 to 1921. The average weekly wage of farm workers in these years increased 162 per cent.

1914—	$ 4.10
1917—	5.40
1918—	6.85
1919—	8.75
1920—	11.15
1921—	10.10

Largely through the compulsory collective action of employers and workers in the Wages Board the unions have come to bargain with the farmers on a national scale. The farmers are represented by the Farmers' Union, an employers' association which attempts to hold the unions in check and to develop some uniformity of conditions in the farming industry.

The strongest of the farm unions and the one which is founded on the soundest principles of organization is the National Union of Agricultural Workers, an industrial union composed exclusively of farm workers which had a membership of 150,000 to 200,000 in 1921. Its entrance fees and dues are small; it aims to spend its income in direct labor conflicts and in organizing activity rather than in building up large insurance funds for its members.

Its organizers act as the defenders of the farm laborers in every type of dispute between the workers and the employers. It is open to any farm worker in England and Wales on payment of twenty-five cents initiation fee and ten cents a week dues. The Scotch farm workers are organized in the Scotch Farm Servants' Union, a militant and successful organization under the leadership of Joseph Duncan. In addition to these two large industrial unions for farm workers only, about 100,000 farm workers were organized in an agricultural section of the Workers' Union in 1921. The presence of this union and the National Union of Agricultural Workers in the same field, appealing to the same workers, was not a fortunate thing for the farm workers at a time when unity of action was particularly desirable.

REACTION ON THE FARM

The abolition of the Wages Board and the terrible depression of 1921-23 had disastrous consequences for the farm workers and their unions. Wages went down from $11.15 at the peak in 1920 to $6.60 in 1923. Hours were lengthened to fifty and fifty-four per week. The loss of union membership was marked. The National Union of Agricultural Workers with less than half its former membership was left in the field as the only important representative of the English farm workers.

In spite of this fact there was a great deal of fighting spirit left among the farm workers. A farm workers' strike, the first large strike on the British countryside for fifty years, broke out in Norfolk in the spring of 1923 and it is estimated that 10,000 farm workers joined in the struggle which resulted in a partial victory and the strengthening of the union by the addition of several thousand new members.

A LABOR PROGRAM FOR THE LAND

The Labor Party has appreciated the necessity of developing a national program for the land. Neither the leaders nor the rank and file are agreed as to future methods of cultivation: some believe that large holdings are to be desired, but the apparent tendency of British farm life at the present time is toward smaller holdings. Without committing themselves to a rigid policy the leaders of the Labor Party have seen that the development of a new system of agriculture is imperative. In co-operation with their farm members they drew up, in the autumn of 1921, a comprehensive land program published under the title, "The Labor Party and the Countryside."

The Labor Party definitely commits itself to national ownership of the land as a goal, condemning the private ownership of land and calling for "the abolition of landlordism."

"The Labor Party traces many of the evils of the present agricultural system, as well as much of the past oppression of the rural workers, to the power given to individuals by the private ownership of land. Though some landowners are eager to improve their own land, the landlord class as a whole, with its bulwark in the lawyers and land agents and in the House of Lords, is found obstructing every national reform concerning land. Here and there large tracts of land lie undeveloped or uncultivated or are used in ways hostile to the utmost food production because of the arbitrary decision or the neglect of private owners. . . . For the Labor Party the substitution of public for private ownership in the land (subject to equitable treatment of each person whose property is required for the public good, and to a proper security of tenure for the home and the homestead) underlies in principle all its specific proposals. Every step that is taken will be in that direction and in no other."

But national ownership of the land does not mean national control. "The Labor Party holds that the Authority should be, in the main, local not national. We want no traveling officials from Whitehall instructing the farmers what to grow on particular fields!"

What, then, does the Labor Party propose as the machinery for land government? The Party proposes:

Local Councils of Agriculture with
Representatives of the Farmers
Representatives of the Farm Workers
Representatives of the Local Government.

Above this local government of farming would be a National Council of Agriculture which would not attempt to control the local developments but would compel the adoption of a consistent National Land Policy.

EXPERIMENTING WITH THE LAND

The Labor Party does not propose to take one leap from the present system of ownership to nationalization. It proposes rather to use the Local Councils of Agriculture to enforce certain standards of efficiency and to take over land which is not being properly cultivated. It believes that no farmer has a right to hold land which is not being used for the benefit of the community. To overcome the present evil it would give power to the Local Agriculture Councils to confiscate land and develop it scientifically. It would not disturb the efficient farmer in the conduct of his farm but would encourage him to develop new initiative. It would not tax improvements made by the farmers, since it holds that such a policy is "suicidal." It would set up in each county "one fair-sized experimental farm, to be cultivated on business lines in such a way as to demonstrate what could be done by the most improved methods."

In regard to the whole question of large and small hold-

ings the Labor Party maintains an open mind. It proposes to give the farmers the widest opportunity for experimentation. It would not eject the farmer from his farm, or dictate the size of farm he should cultivate if he is honestly trying to develop his land. It is quite as anxious to protect the farmers and farm workers from a new bureaucracy of national officials as it is to free the whole farming population from the yoke of the landlord.

"The Labor Party whilst agreeing with the Chief Scientific Advisor of the Ministry of Agriculture that land must pass from private to public ownership, entertains no such thought as that of the Government at any time working all the farms. In whomsoever the ownership of the land may be vested, agricultural production must be the work of those who understand it; and must be independently managed, holding by holding. Whether the future lies with small holdings, with the present medium-sized farms, or with highly-capitalized production on much larger farms, no one can at present foresee. Different crops in different parts of the country will call for different units of production. The view of the Labor Party is that now and for many years to come, with the steady increase of the cultivated area and the improvement of cultivation that must imperatively be secured, there is room in a National Policy for Agriculture for farms of all sizes—for as many small holdings as are likely to be demanded by really qualified applicants, likely to make a success of them on fair terms; for some very large farms requiring huge capital—not to mention also municipal farms and the farms of Co-operative Societies—and at the same time for the thousands of medium-sized farms upon which the country now in the main depends for its home-grown foodstuffs."

Chapter 14

SOCIAL IDEALISM

Idealism has played a large part in the growth of the British labor movement. The writings and lectures of men like Robert Owen, Karl Marx, William Morris and others in the last century did much to create the movement: the writings of men like Sidney Webb, G. D. H. Cole, Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells have done much in this century to give the labor movement intelligent purpose and win many of the middle-class humanitarians to the labor cause.

There is an evident tendency for the idealism of the British workers to take a more practical turn as their movement gains in power and responsibility. Today there is nothing Utopian about the movement. It is not doctrinaire. It is not very much concerned with allegiance to any one system of thought. For that reason it has escaped many of the bitter controversies about dogma which have almost wrecked the continental movement.

The British labor ideal may well be described as a Labor Commonwealth, socialistic in nature but not clearly defined. The average worker does not stop to analyze his ideals: he wants certain things and he trusts the leaders who seem to have executive ability and at the same time to understand his wants. The labor army is so large that it contains in its ranks many million private soldiers who never think of trade unionism except in terms of an extra shilling or another hour of rest. But a democratic movement is not necessarily limited to the vision of its ma-

jority. Most idealistic movements are guided by a few men who put the desires of the people into definite plans of their own. The moral passion for a better world comes from the oppressed people: the plan for a better world usually comes from scholars and writers whose leisure has allowed them more reflection.

STATE SOCIALISM

If socialism is described as the movement for the co-operative ownership and democratic management of industry, then the ideal of the British labor movement is a socialist ideal. But within the broad limits of socialism there are many schools of thought. What does "co-operative ownership" mean? What does "democratic management" mean? Above all, how is the transition to the new society to be accomplished?

In attaining the Labor Commonwealth one group of thinkers has emphasized the importance of government action. Another has emphasized the importance of industrial organization of the workers. The former group is led by England's leading socialist, Sidney Webb. In "A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain," Sidney and Beatrice Webb have proposed an elaborate and definite program for realizing the labor ideal through governmental action. Their program must be regarded as more than the proposal of two individuals: it unquestionably expresses the view point of a considerable part of the labor movement. Some of its main steps may be roughly outlined as follows:

1. Abolish the House of Lords: it is a nuisance.

2. Keep the King: he does no harm and a titular head may be helpful in keeping the British Commonwealths together.

3. In place of the present Parliament with its House of

Commons overloaded with business and international duties, and its useless House of Lords, establish two Parliaments, a Political Parliament and a Social Parliament, both elected in much the same way that the present House of Commons is chosen.

The Political Parliament would control foreign affairs, the courts and the police power. The Social Parliament would control social and industrial administration including taxation, the industries owned by the state, the school system and public health. The Political Parliament might have a Cabinet not entirely unlike the present one with departments for Foreign Affairs, Justice and the Colonies. The Social Parliament should work chiefly through committees with a committee for each great industry and general committees to supervise all industries. This Social Parliament would take over many of the functions now in the sphere of private business; indeed it would be a Chamber of Public Business. Its members should be industrial experts and labor administrators.

4. The work of the Political and Social Parliaments should be made clearly distinct by statute and in the case of dispute over powers and functions the Parliaments should act together through Joint Committees or accept the decisions of the courts. Neither Parliament should be supreme over the other.

5. Industries should be managed by tripartite District Councils and National Boards composed, for example, of sixteen members, five from the workers' organizations, five from the administrative experts and five from the community as a whole, with the leading executive officer as chairman. Each industry should be responsible in a general way to the Social Parliament but there should be no attempt at building up a national bureaucracy to take away management from the local bodies. There should be Works

Committees with power to make suggestions but not the power to choose foremen and managers.

6. Great industries like the mines, railroads, canals, banking and insurance might be nationalized immediately, but no fixed rule should be made in advance concerning the socialization of other industries. There should be a wide field for individual enterprise, for individual saving and for the development of local consumers' co-operatives.

There is no place in the Webbs' program for violent or catastrophic change. It is a plan inspired by almost unlimited faith in the power of the democratic state to transform itself by votes.

GUILD SOCIALISM

Side by side with the movement for a Socialist Constitution there has grown up a vigorous demand for the assumption of the powers of government by the workers themselves through their own organizations. This movement, which has come to be known as Guild Socialism, is partly the result of the fear of a gigantic, socialistic bureaucracy which may perpetuate the worst evils of capitalism. That fear was strengthened during the war by the mismanagement of the government.

The main program of Guild Socialism as adopted by the National Guilds League in 1921 is a general plan for a new kind of society. The most important planks of the Guild platform are:

The Wage system is to be *abolished.**

The New Social Order is to be established *by the workers.*

The Government of Industry is to be entrusted to *Democratic Guilds.*

Society is to be recognized as *a grouping of Democratic*

*Italics not ours.

Associations each entrusted with and fulfilling its special purpose and function.

The distinctive doctrine of Guild Socialism is derived from its emphasis upon the unions rather than the government as the starting point of a new social structure. Make the unions into self-governing associations or guilds, says the guild socialist, representing all the workers in each industry, and then the state as we know it today will gradually lose its meaning. "Parliamentary democracy is not in any real sense representative government; for the idea of representation implies, what is absent in the huge geographical constituencies of today, a real unity and coherence of purpose among those who join to elect their representative." If there is to be any governing power over industry it should be an association or Council of workers representing their Guilds. "I would wash out the state as it now exists," says G. D. H. Cole, who is England's leading Guild Socialist, "and replace it by functional organizations."

The plan of the Building Guild is held up as the model of the kind of organization which the unions must develop in order to take over industry. Immediate steps are suggested for the unions to train their members in co-operation and responsibility.

"In their factories and workshops the workers must begin the struggle for the right to elect their foremen. They must bring foremen, deputies and overlookers into the same unions as the rest of the workers; and they must strive to get questions of discipline settled by the unions and not by the employers. Again, they must hire out their labor, while they continue to hire it out, not individually but through their union. They must compel the employer to pay the union or workshop branch a lump sum, which the workers will divide among themselves as they think fit. Labor must be bought and sold, no longer piecemeal, but in bulk.

A collective standard rate must, during the period of transition, take the place of the individual standard rate of today. Above all, the employer must be made to deal, not with each workman directly, but with the union."

National ownership of the great industries, for the guild socialist, is important but it is not the chief aim of the movement. Nationalization in itself must be accompanied by the transformation of every industry into a self-governing public service conducted without profit by the workers engaged in the industry.

In actual practice the state socialist and the guild socialist leaders are working for the program of the Labor Party which has been influenced by both schools of thought but chiefly by the state socialist school. There is no separate propaganda organization for state socialism: Sidney Webb and his followers sit in high places within the Labor Party. The guild socialist propaganda body is the National Guilds Council which was formed in April, 1922, and approved by the Trades Union Congress in September of that year. This is an organization of guilds, unions and individuals interested in promoting the guild movement. Its purpose is to advance the cause of guild socialism by propaganda and research.

THE CHURCH AS A SOCIAL FORCE

Within the British churches there is a rapidly growing demand for co-operation with labor. While the church as a whole still stands with the privileged classes, a strong minority of clergy and laity have come out openly in favor of a Labor Commonwealth as the only Christian society.

In the May Day labor parade of 1921 there marched through the streets of London at the head of the procession many of England's leading churchmen. Eighteen prominent clergymen of London from both the Church of Eng-

land and the free churches signed a public appeal declaring that "for the fundamental witness of May Day the Church, too, must stand or be false to its faith." Many of these clergymen have joined the Labor Party and take active part in its work.

The free churches, which in many districts are composed largely of workers, have given scores of local preachers to the unions who transferred their moral enthusiasm quite naturally from the church meeting to the union hall. "The finest men in the labor and socialist movement," says Philip Snowden, "are the men who have been trained in the churches." There are many notable examples, not the least being Arthur Henderson, who has been for many years one of England's active Christian leaders.

In order to develop co-operation between the church and labor a number of powerful organizations have been formed. The largest of these is the Industrial Christian Fellowship of the Church of England. The League of Faith and Labor, the Brotherhood Movement and the Fellowship of Reconciliation are all playing their part in bringing the church and labor together, particularly in stating the moral aims of labor to Christian audiences and readers.

It must not be supposed that British labor has in any way endorsed the churches as organizations or brought issues of religious belief into the labor movement. It has merely recognized the kinship between the fundamental aims of labor and the aims of the progressive section of the churches in striving for a society in which love and co-operation shall replace hatred and competition. The war brought home to the churches the need of effective social organization for a Christian society. The best of the church leaders have recognized in the labor program the logical method of progress toward a Christian social order

and they have plunged into the battle side by side with the leaders of the unions and the Labor Party. Their presence is one more contributing factor to the moral idealism of the labor movement.

An outline is not primarily a book of prophecy or opinion, and we shall not attempt here to forecast the future of the British labor movement or to evaluate it. We can, however, record an impression. The movement presents the appearance to an American observer of a solid, powerful body of workers progressing slowly but inevitably toward the control of British life. It is based upon a profound faith that the people are ready to assume control of both economic and political institutions. It is the most advanced expression of the aspirations of Western democracy.

THE GREAT EVENTS OF BRITISH LABOR HISTORY

1720—Seven thousand journeymen tailors of London formed one of the first British unions to raise wages and shorten the hours of work. Parliament passed a law prohibiting the combination.

1780—The Industrial Revolution with the development of large factories brought about the organization of many trade unions and a number of strikes.

1799—Parliament passed the Combination Act, a sweeping measure prohibiting all labor combination. Even benefit societies of workers were prohibited by the Act of 1800. The law was used chiefly to break strikes.

1812—40,000 weavers went on strike for higher wages and their strike committee was put in jail.

1824–25—The Combination Acts were repealed chiefly through the work of Francis Place. Collective bargaining was made legal.

1825—A financial panic and depression destroyed many unions after violent struggles in strikes and lockouts.

1834—The Grand National Consolidated Union started and grew in a few weeks to a membership of 500,000. It was the first big labor federation of British history. Robert Owen played an important part in founding it. It expanded too rapidly, was overwhelmed with lockouts and died quickly. The employers used the "yellow-dog contracts" in which the workers were compelled to promise never to join the Grand Consolidated.

1834—Six Dorchester farm workers were sentenced to seven years' exile from England for administering a simple oath in initiating members into their union.

1834—The Utopian socialism of Robert Owen spread rapidly among the workers.

1839—The Chartist Movement turned the attention of workers to political emancipation during the financial depression of 1837–42.

1844—The Rochdale Pioneers started the original British co-operative store near Manchester with 28 members and $140 capital. Their sales for the first week amounted to $10.

1847—A Ten-Hour Law for women and children was passed by Parliament after agitation by the unions.

1851—The Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the first powerful labor union, was founded in the metal trades. It combined trade protection and a highly centralized executive power with benefit and insurance features. This combination has proved a model for unions ever since.

1863—The Co-operative Wholesale Society was founded.

1867—The principle of arbitration was widely accepted for the first time with the establishment of Arbitration boards in several localities.

1868—The Trades Union Congress as a national conference of British unions was founded with a membership of 118,000.

1871—The Nine-Hour Day was won by several unions after bitter strikes.

1871—The Trade-Union Act was passed by Parliament, protecting trade union funds from suit or theft and recognizing unions as legal in spite of restraint of trade. Picketing, however, was made illegal.

1872—The farm workers under Joseph Arch went on strike and formed the National Agricultural Laborers' Union. After a few successes the union was crushed by the employers who discriminated against union members.

1879—Great financial depression resulted in loss of union membership, lower wages and longer hours. Many unions lost the nine-hour day.

1880—Inspired by Karl Marx, Henry George and others, socialist societies rapidly extended their work. The Fabian Society of socialist intellectuals was founded in 1883.

1889—The great London Dockers' Strike ended in victory for the strikers and inspired other unskilled workers to organize.

1890—Kier Hardie and John Burns were elected to Parliament as independent working class representatives.

1893—The Independent Labor Party was founded.

1900—The Trades Union Congress committed itself to political action by choosing a Labor Representation Committee which was the forerunner of the British Labor Party.

1901—The Taff-Vale decision of the highest law court declared that

unions could be sued for damages resulting from a strike even when the officers were in no way responsible for the damage.

1904—The Labor Representation Committee joined the Socialist International.

1906—Labor scored its first great political victory in the election of 29 members of Parliament. The Labor Representation Committee was changed to the British Labor Party.

1906—The Trade Disputes Act was forced through Parliament largely as a result of the labor victory. This sweeping law prohibits all civil actions against unions for wrongful acts, legalizes picketing and allows contracts of employment to be broken.

1908—The Old Age Pensions Act was passed.

1908—The Osborne Judgment, another court decision, made it possible for the unions to be restrained from paying a political tax to the Labor Party and so threatened to destroy labor political organization.

1909—The first Trade Boards were established resulting in minimum wages for sweated industries.

1911—The unemployment insurance act was passed.

1913—The Trade-Union Act of 1913 destroyed the effect of the Osborne Judgment and left unions free to engage in political propaganda.

1914—Beginning of the World War.

1915—The Triple Alliance of railroad, mining and transport workers was formed.

1917—Report of the Whitley Committee establishing Joint Industrial Councils.

1918—End of the World War.

1918—Labor Party won 70 seats in the House of Commons. A new platform was adopted, "Labor and the New Social Order."

1919—A successful general railroad strike was conducted by the National Union of Railwaymen.

1920—The building guilds were founded.

1920—The Trades Union Congress formed a General Council for more effective national action. The Trades Union Congress reached the peak of its membership, 6,500,000.

1921—The Triple Alliance was destroyed on "Black Friday" through the failure of the three unions involved to co-operate in calling a general strike.

1921–22—A severe industrial depression caused the greatest unem-

ployment in the history of Great Britain with a heavy loss in union membership.

1922—The Labor Party became the official opposition in the House of Commons by the election of 144 representatives.

1923—A strong movement for the amalgamation of unions in the same trade developed with the encouragement of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress.

WHAT TO READ

(All of the British books and pamphlets mentioned below can be purchased through the Labor Party, 33 Eccleston Square, London, S. W. 1. The pamphlets and most of the books are inexpensive.)

GENERAL AND HISTORICAL

History of Trade Unionism—Sidney and Beatrice Webb.
What the Workers Want—Arthur Gleason (Harcourt, New York).
Introduction to Trade Unionism—G. D. H. Cole.
Trade Unionism—C. M. Lloyd.
History of British Socialism—Max Beer (2 Vols.).
Trade Unionism, Past and Future—Mark Starr (pamphlet).

LABOR IN POLITICS

Labor and the New Social Order (pamphlet).
The Labor Party on the Threshold—Sidney Webb (pamphlet).
A Policy for the Labor Party—Ramsay MacDonald.
Labor and Capital in Parliament—Labor Research Department.
The Capital Levy Explained—Hugh Dalton.
Labor and National Finance—Philip Snowden.
The Law Relating to Trade Unions—H. H. Slesser.

INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS

Industrial Negotiations and Agreements (pamphlet).
Workshop Organization (war period)—G. D. H. Cole.
The Frontier of Control—Carter Goodrich (Harcourt, N. Y.).
Unemployment Insurance by Industry (pamphlet).
Unemployment; a Labor Policy (pamphlet).
Out of Work—G. D. H. Cole.
Economics of Unemployment—J. A. Hobson.
Workmen's Compensation—W. H. Thompson.
The Labor Party and the Countryside (pamphlet).
Women and Trade Unions—Barbara Drake.

THE CO-OPERATIVES

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT—Sidney and Beatrice Webb.
THE BRITISH CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT—Harry Laidler (pamphlet of the Co-operative League of America, 2 W. 13th St., N. Y.).

SOCIALISM

A CONSTITUTION FOR THE SOCIALIST COMMONWEALTH OF GREAT BRITAIN—Sidney and Beatrice Webb.
GUILD SOCIALISM RE-STATED—G. D. H. Cole.
NATIONAL GUILDS—S. G. Hobson.
THE POLICY OF GUILD SOCIALISM (pamphlet).
SOCIALISM, CRITICAL AND CONSTRUCTIVE—Ramsay MacDonald.

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